THE NEW SPIRIT IN INDIA

HENRY W. NEVINSON

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THE NEW SPIRIT IN INDIA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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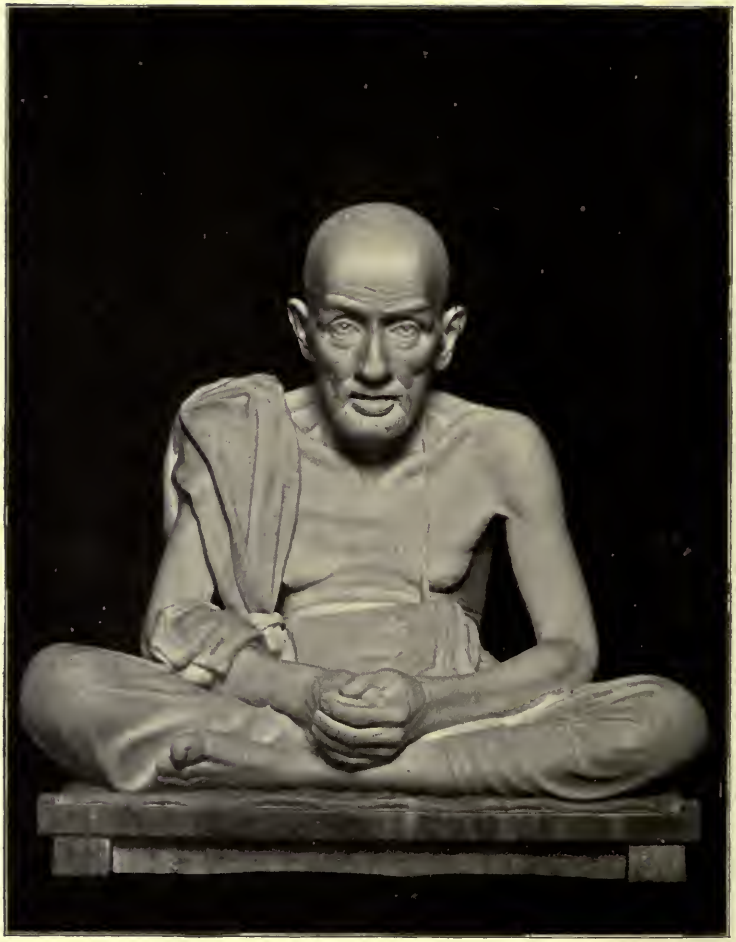

CONTEMPLATION.

(Statue ot a SANYASI, by G. M. MHATTRE of Bombay.)

Frontispiece.]

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BY

HENRY W. NEVINSON

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THE NEW SPIRIT IN INDIA

INTRODUCTION

Summary of Recent Events

Although politics are not the only subject of this book, it may be of assistance if I summarize very briefly the chief political events of the few years preceding the winter of 1907–8 when I was in India.

No hard-and-fast line can be drawn in history, but the arrival of Lord Curzon as Viceroy on December 30th, 1898, marks a fairly strong and natural division. He had previously been Under-Secretary for India (1891–92), and Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs (1895–98), and he was well known for the distinction of his Oxford career and for his travels in Central Asia, Persia, and the Far East. In the House of Commons he had further won a high reputation for industry, knowledge, and self-reliance.

The first year of his office (1899) was marked by a change in the currency, by which a gold standard was introduced, gold and currency reserves instituted, and a permanent rate of exchange fixed at

sixteen pence to the rupee, or fifteen rupees to the pound sterling—a higher value than the rupee had reached in the fluctuations of the five previous years. Before the closing of the mints, it had sunk to 13·1 pence.

In the same year Lord Curzon began his policy of efficiency by reducing the CALCUTTA MUNICIPALITY from seventy-five to fifty, cutting out twenty-five of the elected members, in spite of strong protests on the part of the Indian electors.

He also began to earn an enviable unpopularity among certain classes of Anglo-Indians for his characteristic vigour in denouncing a British battalion, some privates of which were believed to have outraged a native woman to death in RANGOON and remained undetected.

The year 1900 was a season of terrible FAMINE, especially in the Central Provinces. About 5,500,000 people came on relief works, and famine was followed by cholera.* At the same time the Punjab LAND ALIENATION ACT was passed, forbidding the transference of land to any but agriculturists, the intention being to prevent the expropriation of peasants by money-lenders.

LORD WELBY'S COMMISSION on Indian Expenditure issued their reports, but the majority report

* For an eye-witness's account see "The Great Famine," by Mr. Vaughan Nash, at that time correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* (Longmans: 1900).

suggested no important changes of taxation beyond the transference of charges amounting to £293,000 a year to the Imperial Exchequer. Their recommendation that England should contribute £50,000 to the expenses of the India Office was not carried out.

In 1901 the North-West Frontier Province was created, and in the following year Lord Kitchener was appointed Commander-in-Chief, the Education Commission, presided over by Sir Thomas Raleigh, published its Report (Sir Guru Das Banerjee writing a Note of Dissent), and the Police Commission began to sit under Sir Andrew Fraser (afterwards Lieut.-Governor of Bengal).

In the same year Lord Curzon increased his unpopularity among the class of Anglo-Indians above mentioned, by punishing the 9th Lancers, because at Sialkot two privates were believed to have beaten to death a native cook who refused to procure a native woman for them ; they remained undetected.

The next year (1903) opened with a great Durbar at Delhi, the estimated cost of which was £180,000, and the real cost probably at least £200,000, apart from the local expenses of provinces and Native States. The Tibet expedition started in the same year.

More important than either of these events for the history of India was the reduction of the salt tax, or more properly, the reduction of the

price of salt under the Government monopoly. Between this year and 1907 it was reduced from 2 rupees 8 annas per maund to 1 rupee (a maund = 82·29 lbs.).*

Lord Curzon's office was now renewed for a further uncertain term, believed to be two years. But before his departure for six months' leave in 1904, he had already reduced his popularity among the educated classes of India. By the OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT, he extended the Acts of 1889 and 1897 so as to include information upon civil affairs and matters of fact among the offences, as well as military secrets and newspaper criticism, "likely to bring the Government or constituted authority into suspicion or contempt." As the burden of proof was thrown on the accused, and it was unnecessary to establish criminal intention for conviction, this Act limited newspapers to the supply of such information as the Government pleased.

In the same year an attempt was made to raise the standard of higher education by the UNIVERSITIES ACT. The main object was to induce the five Universities of Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Lahore, and Allahabad to undertake instruction and supervision as well as examination, to which their

* The revenue from salt in 1907–8 was £3,336,900 against £4,362,706 in 1906–7, but the consumption of salt went up in 1907–8 to 44,289,000 maunds, compared to an average of 36,445,000 maunds for the ten previous years.

function had been limited at first. It was laid down that all students at a University must be members of an affiliated college, and changes were introduced into the constitution of the Senates, which were now to be largely composed of the Chancellor's nominees and *ex-officio* members—High Court Judges, Bishops, members of Executive Councils, the provincial Directors of Public Instruction, and professors of Government and missionary colleges. It was complained that these provisions destroyed the independence of the Universities, and, owing to the increased expense, much reduced the number of students able to compete for degrees. On the other hand, it is maintained, and I believe justly, that the standard of learning in its higher branches has been considerably advanced since the Act among the affiliated colleges.

A few sentences may be quoted from Lord Curzon's Budget Speech in March of this year (1904), as showing his general attitude towards educated Indians and their demands :—

"I sympathize most deeply with the aspirations of the Indians towards greater national unity, and with their desire to play a part in the public life of the country. But I do not think that the salvation of India is to be sought on the field of politics at the present stage of her development. . . . The highest ranks of civil employment in India must as a general rule be held by Englishmen, for the reason that they possess, partly by heredity, partly by up-bringing, and

partly by education, the knowledge of the principles of government, the habits of mind, the vigour of character, which are essential for the task, and that, the rule of India being a British rule, and every other rule being in the circumstances of the case impossible, the tone and standard should be set by those who have created and are responsible for it." *

He further went on to maintain that on salaries of £800 a year and upward, 1263 government servants were Europeans, 15 Eurasians, and 92 Indians; while on salaries between £60 and £800, there were 5205 Europeans, 5420 Eurasians, and 16,283 Indians. These figures were, however, severely analysed by Mr. Gokhale in his Budget speech of 1905.

It was held by educated Indians that a Government Resolution of May 24, 1904, carrying this statement of policy into effect, tended to exclude Indians from the higher branches of the service, and stood in contradiction to QUEEN VICTORIA'S PROCLAMATION for India in 1858, in which occur the following two clauses:—

"We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects; and those obligations we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

"And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our

* "Lord Curzon in India;" selection from his speeches; with Introduction, by Sir Thomas Raleigh. Pp. 142, 143.

subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge."

Accordingly, at the meeting of the National Congress in Bombay at the end of this year, the first resolution was in protest against the EXCLUSION OF INDIANS from the higher grades of the Service. The other resolutions, showing the tendency of the time, included protests against the increasing military expenditure, especially upon the Tibet expedition, and demands for wider education, technical schools, a Permanent Land Settlement, police reform in accordance with the Commission of 1903, the separation of judicial and executive functions throughout the Civil Service, simultaneous examinations for the Service in England and India, and part payment by England of the cost of the India Office in Whitehall. SIR HENRY COTTON, Chief Commissioner of Assam from 1896 to 1902, was President of the Congress that year, and he was deputed to lay the resolutions before the Viceroy in person. But Lord Curzon refused to receive him.

On February 11, 1905, Lord Curzon addressed the CONVOCATION OF CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY with a dissertation upon truthfulness and other virtues—

"I hope I am making no false or arrogant claim," he said, "when I say that the highest ideal of truth is to a

large extent a Western conception. I do not thereby mean to claim that Europeans are universally or even generally truthful, still less do I mean that Asiatics deliberately or habitually deviate from the truth. The one proposition would be absurd, the other insulting. But undoubtedly truth took a high place in the moral codes of the West before it had been similarly honoured in the East, where craftiness and diplomatic wile have always been held in much repute. We may prove it by the common innuendo that lurks in the words 'Oriental diplomacy,' by which is meant something rather tortuous and hypersubtle. The same may be seen in Oriental literature. In your epics truth will often be extolled as a virtue; but quite as often it is attended with some qualification, and very often praise is given to successful deception practised with honest aim."

The Viceroy, addressing his Bengali audience, went on to say that "he knew no country where mare's-nests were more prolific than here"; and he warned them especially against flattery and vituperation, and afterwards against eloquence.

"In India," he said, "there are two sets of people, the reticent and the eloquent. I dare say you know to which class the people in this part of the country belong. I am sometimes lost in admiration at the facility with which they speak in a foreign language, and I envy the accomplishment. All I say to you is, do not presume upon this talent."

Towards the conclusion of the speech, he introduced the following sentences:—

"Learn that the true salvation of India will not come

from without, but must be created within. It will not be given you by enactment of the British Parliament, or of any Parliament at all. . . . Be true Indians—that is the prompting of nationality. . . . In India I see the claim constantly advanced that a man is not merely a Bengali, or an Uriya, or a Mahratta, or a Sikh, but a member of the Indian nation. I do not think it can yet be said that there is any Indian nation, though in the distant future some approach to it may be evolved. However that may be, the Indian is most certainly a member of the British Empire." *

Neither these contradictory remarks on nationality, nor the Viceroy's well-intentioned exposition of the national tendency to deceit, were received by the audience and their friends in a properly chastened spirit. But the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, next to the *Bengalee*, perhaps the most influential Indian paper in Calcutta, contented itself with the following extract from Lord Curzon's book, called "Problems of the Far East" (p. 155 of the edition quoted), where, writing of his conversation with the President of the Korean Foreign Office, he said :—

"Having been warned not to say I was only thirty-three, when he put me the straight question, 'How old are you?' I unhesitatingly responded, 'Forty.' 'I presume you are a near relative of the Queen of England?' (asked the President). 'No,' I replied, 'I am not.' But I was fain to add, 'I am, however, as yet an unmarried man,' with which unscrupulous suggestion I completely regained the old gentleman's favour."

The quotation was regarded as apt, but the

* "Lord Curzon in India," pp. 491, 498–9.

passage was only a joke, and it must be remembered that Lord Curzon had not claimed that Europeans are universally or even generally truthful. He had called that proposition absurd.

The speech itself would probably have been soon forgotten if it had not been connected in the popular mind with the greatest and most disastrous of Lord Curzon's schemes for promoting his ideal of efficiency —the PARTITION OF BENGAL.

It had long been evident that the Province of Bengal, if the large outlying districts of Orissa, Behar, and Chota Nagpur were included, was too large for one administration. It contained close upon 80,000,000 souls. But of this amount Bengal Proper counted for only 43,000,000. The next largest of the districts was Behar, with 21,500,000. Two things were possible and would have been gladly accepted—either to form a new province out of the western districts of Behar, Chota Nagpur, and Orissa, with a capital at Patna or Ranchi, relieving Bengal of a population of about 33,000,000; or to have elevated Bengal into a Governorship on the same standing as Bombay and Madras, under a Governor appointed directly from England instead of a Lieut.-Governor appointed out of the Indian Civil Service; and at the same time to have organized the outlying districts as Commissionerships, responsible either to the Crown, or to the Governor of Bengal. Either of these two main

schemes would have been accepted without question by the enormous majority of the inhabitants, and the chief principles of the second were favoured by Mr. Brodrick (Lord Midleton), at that time Secretary of State for India.

Lord Curzon, however, was determined to cut Bengal Proper and the Bengali-speaking community in two, giving 25,000,000 of the population to the new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam with a new capital at Dacca, and 18,000,000 of the population to a Province still to be called Bengal, with the old capital of Calcutta, and bound up with the outlying districts of Behar, Chota Nagpur, and Orissa, all of which differ from Bengal in race, language, and civilization, as does Assam. Under this division, the populations of the two new Provinces are approximately 54,000,000 in Bengal, and 31,000,000 in Eastern Bengal and Assam.*

When Partition on these lines was first proposed, it excited strong protest, not only among the Hindu population of Bengal, but among many Civil Servants and Anglo-Indian papers, also among the Mohammedans of Eastern Bengal, who are Bengalis by race, but number three-fifths of the population, and, therefore, might be expected to welcome the change, especially as they were promised considerable advantages under the new administration. Large numbers of public meetings

* Figures in Lord Curzon's Proclamation of July 19, 1905.

were held throughout Bengal to protest against the measure, and petitions were sent to the British Parliament. As the British authorities paid no attention to these representations, the "Swadeshi" (literally "Our own Country") movement was started for the exclusive use of native productions, in the hope that a boycott on British goods might at last induce public opinion in England to take notice of an Indian grievance. As Mr. John Morley said, when speaking as Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons, February 26, 1906: "I am bound to say, nothing was ever worse done in disregard to the feeling and opinion of the majority of the people concerned."

Nevertheless, Lord Curzon accomplished the Partition by an unexpected PROCLAMATION from Simla on September 1, 1905, appointing Sir Andrew Fraser Lieut.-Governor in Calcutta, and Sir Bampfylde Fuller Lieut.-Governor in Dacca, both being entire strangers to Bengal. The Partition came into force on October 16, 1905—a day observed as a fast of humiliation and prayer throughout the Provinces.

In the same month MR. GOKHALE and LALA LAJPAT RAI came to England as Congress Delegates, to lay the demands of the constitutional reform party before English audiences. Lala Lajpat Rai also visited America.

Before the Partition was proclaimed, Lord

Curzon had submitted his RESIGNATION (August 12, 1905), owing to a difference of opinion with Lord Kitchener over the appointment of a new "Military Supply Member" to the Viceroy's Council; and, in reality, over the position of the Commander-in-Chief and the Military Supply Member with regard to the Governor-General in Council. The difference does not concern us, except that, as the Conservative Home Government supported Lord Kitchener's view, and thus drove Lord Curzon to resign, it was widely believed that Mr. Brodrick accepted the Partition the more readily as a salve to Lord Curzon's feelings.*

The EARL OF MINTO was at once appointed to succeed, but Lord Curzon remained to nearly the end of the year, partly in order to welcome the Prince and Princess of Wales on their visit to India. In his farewell speech at Simla (September 30, 1905) he said:—

> "If I were asked to sum up my work in a single word, I would say 'Efficiency.' That has been our gospel, the keynote of our administration." †

No one has questioned his industry and personal

* "Lord Midleton, the Secretary of State at that time, made a reference to the Partition of Bengal in one of his telegrams which undoubtedly led to the inference in that country that that measure had been thrown as a sop to soothe my wounded feelings rather than on grounds of political propriety or expediency."—Lord Curzon in the House of Lords, June 30, 1908.

† "Lord Curzon in India," p. 564.

devotion. During his seven years' tenure, he instituted Commissions on plague, famine, irrigation, universities, and police ; he organized departments of Commerce and Industry, and of Imperial Customs ; he endeavoured to introduce elasticity into the Land Assessment ; he revolutionized our Frontier policy ; and he did more for the preservation of Indian history, architecture, and ancient memorials than any of his predecessors. All this in addition to the other changes and undertakings mentioned above.

The appointment of MR. JOHN MORLEY to the India Office (December, 1905) was received with the utmost enthusiasm by the country, but, unfortunately, Lord Curzon's industrious devotion to efficiency, without consideration of the prejudices or reasonable desires of the people concerned, had sown the seed for the irritation and disturbances of the next two years. The first signs of unrest naturally appeared in Eastern Bengal, where the SWADESHI movement had been instituted as a protest against the Partition. SIR BAMPFYLDE FULLER found himself at once involved in difficulties about the boycott of foreign goods, public meetings, and the participation of schoolboys and students in the political questions that occupied all minds. On April 14, 1906, the Bengal Provincial Conference was dispersed with violence by the police at Barisal. Bodies of punitive police and Gurkhas were

quartered in several small towns and villages at their expense. Schools were deprived of their grants and the right to compete for scholarships. A circular was issued curtailing the right of public meeting, and suppressing processions and the cry of "Bande Mataram." In another circular Sir Bampfylde Fuller laid it down that a fixed proportion of Government posts should be reserved for Mohammedans, and, until that proportion had been reached, no qualified Mohammedan candidate should be rejected in favour of a Hindu candidate, merely because the latter had superior qualifications (May 25, 1906). Finally, owing to some petty disturbances by schoolboys at Serajganj, in the Pabna district (November 15, 1905), the Lieut.-Governor who had already severely punished the two schools in the place, and posted punitive police there, demanded that they should be disaffiliated from Calcutta University. The Government asked him to reconsider the case, and he resigned (August 4, 1906), being succeeded by Sir Lancelot Hare.

The next month was marked by a characteristic description of a simple incident by Calcutta correspondents to the English press. On September 5th Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, twice President of the National Congress and now editor of the *Bengalee* newspaper in Calcutta, was honoured by a common Indian ceremony of "benediction" in a private house. It was an affair of an umbrella,

a chaplet, garlands, and the recitation of verses from the Vedas. It is almost impossible for even a casual visitor to India to escape a score of very similar performances. Yet the correspondents on whom England chiefly depends for Indian news described this as a solemn CORONATION of Mr. Banerjea as India's Emperor, as if to rouse the suspicions and rage of the English people into sensational panic.

In the spring of 1907, local disturbances occurred in Eastern Bengal and the Punjab. Meetings to protest against the Partition had been continually held in Eastern Bengal, and in the first week of March the Nawab Salimullah of Dacca visited the small town of COMILLA in order to encourage counter-demonstrations on the part of the Mohammedans, over whom he claimed great influence. During his visit small riots took place between Hindu and Mohammedan crowds ; a Mohammedan was killed and one or two Hindus. By one means or another, the report was circulated through the country that the Indian Government was favouring the Mohammedan population and would inflict no punishment for the looting of Hindu shops or the abduction of Hindu women, especially widows. Accordingly, shops were looted, Hindu widows abducted, and the cases of outrage upon women by gangs increased in number.

In the third week of April further disturbances

broke out at Jamalpur, another small town in Eastern Bengal, where the Hindus, during a festival, were set upon by Mohammedan rowdies, who desecrated a temple and maintained panic in the district for the next few weeks.

The troubles that arose in the Punjab, about the same time, were largely agricultural in origin. There had been a large increase in the land-assessment, together with a sudden rise in the irrigation rates, especially on the Bari-Doab canal. The Punjab Legislative Council had also brought forward a Colonization Bill altering the agreements by which colonists held reclaimed land, especially in the Chenab Colony, under the Act of 1893. Many relations of these tenants were enlisted in Sikh and other Indian regiments, and ultimately Lord Minto withheld his consent from the Bill. The question of the irrigation dues was also postponed for a year.

Meantime, Indian opinion was constantly irritated by the abuse and ridicule poured upon educated Indians in the "Civil and Military Gazette," the leading Anglo-Indian paper of Lahore. They were spoken of as "babbling B.A.'s," "base-born B.A.'s," "an unhonoured nobility of the school," "serfs," "beggars on horseback," "servile classes," "a class that carries a stigma," and so on. When petitioned twice to put an end to this kind of journalism as stirring up strife between the races, Sir Denzil Ibbetson, at that time Lieut.-Governor

of the Punjab, regretted the tone of the articles but refused to prosecute.

On the other hand, two Indian papers in Lahore were prosecuted—"INDIA" for republishing a letter from America containing a seditious appeal to the native troops, and the "PUNJABEE" for its comments on a case of "Begar," or forced labour, which was supposed to have led to the death of two villagers compelled to work for an official. In the case of *India*, the proprietor and editor, Pindi Das, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, and the printer, Dina Nath, to two years. In the *Punjabee* case, the proprietor, Lala Jaswant Rai, was sentenced, on appeal, to a fine of 1000 rupees and six months' imprisonment, and the editor, K. K. Athavale, to a fine of 200 rupees and six months' imprisonment.

After the judgment of the Chief Court on appeal was given in the *Punjabee* case (April 16, 1907), the prisoners on their way to gaol were met by an enthusiastic crowd, and there was some disturbance, for which three young men were arrested.

This disturbance was followed by a more serious riot at RAWAL PINDI, the greatest military cantonment of the north-west district of India (May 2nd). In the previous February a young and then unknown Indian, named AJIT SINGH, had started an "Indian Patriots' Association," chiefly to deal with the agricultural grievances above mentioned. Various meetings were held, and at Lyallpur (March 22nd) LALA

Lajpat Rai, who had no connection with the Association, but was well known in Lahore as a religious and social reformer in the Arya Samaj, addressed an agricultural audience, in a speech in which he ventured to declare that officials are servants of the public. Ajit Singh also spoke, and this was the only occasion on which the two men were on the same platform.

Meetings were held at Rawal Pindi, on April 7th and 21st. On the latter day Ajit Singh made a violent attack upon the increase of land assessment, calling on the peasants to cease cultivation until the amount was reduced. Mr. Hansraj Sawhny, a prominent pleader, in the chair, checked the speaker, who went away in a rage. But shortly afterwards, Mr. Agnew, the Deputy Commissioner, summoned the chairman and two other lawyers, for an enquiry into the matter. On the very morning of the enquiry, the proceedings were postponed, owing to a telegram from Sir Denzil Ibbetson, and the large crowd which had collected, instead of dispersing, swept down a main road, destroyed and burnt some furniture from a mission house and church, and damaged some gardens and houses of Europeans, together with a Hindu workshop, where the men were on strike. The police did not appear, but troops patrolled the town later.

For this riot, six prominent lawyers were arrested and kept in gaol, no bail being allowed, through the

hot weather from May 3rd to October 1st, when they were acquitted and discharged, the magistrate declaring the evidence was fabricated. In consequence of this unmerited imprisonment, one of them has since died.

About sixty other persons were arrested, and five were condemned, three of them to seven years' imprisonment for riot and arson. The trial took place before Mr. A. E. Martineau, Sessions Judge of Delhi, as Special Magistrate, and the terms of his judgment did much to restore Indian confidence in British justice.

The fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Mutiny (May 10th), had been fixed by some Anglo-Indian journalists as the date for a probable rising against the British, and, owing to their warnings, preparations were made for withdrawing the British residents, especially in the Punjab towns, into the forts. But in spite of all that prophecy could do, no outbreak occurred.

However, on May 9th, Lala Lajpat Rai was suddenly deported from Lahore without notice, charge, or trial, and conveyed to the fort in Mandalay. Ajit Singh was similarly deported from Amritsar.

When questioned in the Commons as to this breach of "Habeas Corpus," Mr. John Morley pleaded the powers of deportation granted by a Regulation of 1818, under which thirty-two persons were at the moment detained in restraint.

On May 11th, Lord Minto issued a Proclamation limiting the right of public meeting in parts of the Punjab and Eastern Bengal. Under this Ordinance seven days' written notice was required before a meeting, the meeting might be prohibited by a magistrate, and the police were to attend.

On May 27th, the Viceroy refused his assent to the Punjab Colonization Bill above described.

Meantime, on behalf of the Home Department of the Government of India, Sir Herbert Risley issued a Circular with regard to the political behaviour of schoolboys, teachers, students, and professors (May 6th). It ordained that where schoolboys associated themselves with political movements grants-in-aid should be withdrawn from the school, and the privilege of competing for scholarships withheld; universities were not to recognize the school, nor to admit its candidates to matriculation. Schoolmasters were allowed by the Circular "to have a right to their own opinions as much as any one else," but should be visited by "disciplinary action" if their utterances endangered the orderly development of the boys, or were subversive of their respect for authority. In the case of colleges, students were allowed to attend meetings, but if they became active in politics, the privileges of affiliation should be withdrawn. Professors were permitted more latitude, but if they

encouraged students to attend political meetings, the university or the Government should intervene.

The BUDGET for the year 1907–8 was estimated at £75,012,800 revenue, and £74,238,100 expenditure, giving a surplus of £774,700. In his Budget speech of June 6th, Mr. John Morley made the important announcement that TWO NOMINATED INDIANS were to be added to the INDIA COUNCIL in Whitehall, and gave the names of Mr. K. G. Gupta, as representing the Hindus, and Mr. S. H. Bilgrami, as representing the Mohammedans.

At the same time he announced a SCHEME OF REFORMS, proposed by the Indian Government at Simla, to be submitted to the Local Governments for criticism. In brief, the scheme included :—

(1) The institution of an "Imperial Advisory Council," consisting of about sixty members, all appointed by the Viceroy, including twenty ruling chiefs, "with a suitable number of territorial magnates of every province where landholders of sufficient dignity and status are to be found." This council was to be summoned at the Viceroy's pleasure, and to hold nothing but private, informal, and confidential meetings, having no legislative powers of any sort.

(2) Provincial Advisory Councils—apparently seven—of smaller size, but consisting of the local Imperial Councillors and representatives of lesser landholders, industry, commerce, capital, and the

professional classes, all nominated by the head of the Local Government; their functions also to be entirely consultative.

(3) The enlargement of the Viceroy's Legislative Council from twenty-four to fifty-three by the inclusion of more Viceroy's nominees, two representatives of the Chambers of Commerce, two Mohammedans elected by rotation from Mohammedan districts, seven landholders elected by the landed magnates, and seven instead of four members elected by the non-official members of the Legislative Councils. The last point may appear like a concession to popular representation, but seven out of fifty-three is not so powerful a fraction as four out of twenty-four.

(4) The enlargement of the Provincial Legislative Councils, but this proposal was left vague, beyond a few suggestions.

Some miscellaneous points in the history of the year remain to be noticed.

The official return of deaths from PLAGUE during the first four months of the year (1907) amounted to 642,000, and the total deaths from plague since its first appearance in 1896 up to April, 1907, were 5,250,000.

On August 7th, and again on October 2nd, disturbances arose in College Square and Beadon Square in Calcutta, and in the same city a popular speaker named BEPIN CHANDRA PAL was sentenced

to six months' imprisonment (September 11th) for refusing to give evidence in the prosecution of the Indian paper, *Bande Mataram*. When summoned as witness before the magistrate, Mr. Kingsford, he replied :—

> "I have conscientious objections against taking part in a prosecution which I believe to be unjust and injurious to the cause of popular freedom and the interests of public peace." (August 26.)

Two special commissions were instituted in the autumn—a DECENTRALIZATION COMMISSION, under Mr. Charles Hobhouse, at that time Under-Secretary for India, and a FACTORY LABOUR COMMISSION, under Mr. W. T. Morrison of the Bombay Civil Service. They sat in various parts of India during the winter.

In July an agreement was announced with China, by which it was ultimately arranged that China should regard 51,000 chests of OPIUM exported from India as a standard amount, this amount to be decreased yearly by one-tenth from 1908 till it disappeared in ten years, provided that China made similar reductions in her produce.

On August 31st an ANGLO-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT was signed, dividing Persia into Russian and British spheres of influence, with a neutral zone between ; Afghanistan was recognized as outside Russian influence, and both Powers agreed not to send

representatives to Lhassa. In some quarters it was hoped that this Agreement would warrant a large reduction in the military expenditure of India.

In October Sir George Clarke, lately Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence, arrived from England as new Governor of Bombay. In the same month Mr. Keir Hardie, ex-leader of the Labour Party in the Commons, visited Eastern Bengal, where his private statements and conversation were misrepresented by correspondents to the English newspapers and agencies as seditious speeches.

On November 1st a Seditious Meetings Act was passed by the Viceroy in Council at Simla, giving Local Governments the power to "proclaim" the whole or part of their provinces, in which case seven days' notice in writing must be given of every public meeting, including the assembly of twenty persons or over in a private house; the District Magistrate, or Commissioner of Police was given power to prohibit such a meeting, or to direct that police should be present.

Mr. Gokhale and Dr. Rash Behari Ghose spoke strongly in opposition to the Bill as Indian representatives on the Council, and the Tikka Sahib of Nabha, a Sikh representative of the Punjab, joined them in voting against the measure, which was carried by a majority of nine British against three Indians, no other members of Council being able

to attend, as the session was in Simla contrary to precedent for important legislation.

The next week brought the full text of Mr. John Morley's speech to his constituents at Arbroath, in defence of his Indian policy. I quote the following sentences on account of the attention they attracted :—

"Does any one want me to go to London to-morrow morning and to send a telegram to Lord Kitchener, and tell him to disband the Indian Army, and send home as fast as we can dispatch transports the British contingent of the Army, and bring away the whole of the Civil Servants? . . . How should we look in the face of the civilized world if we had turned our back upon our duty and upon our task? How should we bear the savage stings of our own consciences when, as assuredly we should, we heard through the dark distances the roar and scream of confusion and carnage in India?"

Speaking of Mr. Keir Hardie and one of his reported sayings in Eastern Bengal, Mr. Morley said :—

"I am not at all sure that he said this, but it does not matter, because many other people have said it—That whatever is good in the way of self-government for Canada must be good for India. In my view that is the most concise statement that I can imagine, and the grossest fallacy in all politics. . . . You might just as well say that, because a fur coat in Canada at certain times of the year is a most comfortable garment, therefore a fur coat in the Deccan of India is a sort of handy garment that you might be very happy to wear."

A few sentences further on he added :—

"I hope that the Government of India, so long as I am connected with it and responsible for it to Parliament and to the country, will not be hurried by the anger of the impatient idealist. The impatient idealist—you know him, I know him, I like him ; I have been one myself. He says, 'You admit that so and so is right, why don't you do it? why don't you do it now?' Ah, gentlemen, how many of the most tragic miscarriages in human history have been due to the impatience of the idealist?

". . . You would not have me see men set the prairie on fire without arresting the hand. You would not blame me when I saw some men smoking their pipes near powder magazines—you would not call me an arch-coercionist if I said, 'Away with the men, and away with the powder.'"

In answer to those who said India was astonished at the licence extended to newspapers and speakers, he continued :—

"Orientals, they say, do not understand it. But we are not Orientals ; that is the root of the matter. We English, Scotch, and Irish are in India because we are not Orientals. . . . We are representatives, not of Oriental civilization but Western civilization, of its methods, its principles, its practices ; and I for one will not be hurried into an excessive haste for repression by the argument that Orientals do not understand this toleration.

"Anybody who has read history knows that the Extremist beats the Moderate by his fire, his fiery energy, his very narrowness and concentration. But still we hold that it would be the height of political folly for us at this moment to refuse to do all we can to rally the Moderates to the cause

of the Government, simply because the policy will not satisfy the Extremists. Let us, if we can, rally the Moderates, and, if we are told that the policy will not satisfy the Extremists, so be it; our line will remain the same.

"... Some of them (the leaders of unrest) are angry with me. Why? Because I have not been able to give them the moon. I have got no moon, and if I had I would not give them the moon.

"... I am not surprised that these educated Indians who read these great masters and teachers of ours (Milton, Burke, Macaulay, and Mill) are intoxicated with the ideas of freedom and nationality and self-government which these great writers promulgate. Who of us can wonder who had the privilege in the days of our youth, at college or at home, of turning over these golden pages and seeing that lustrous firmament dome over our youthful imaginations—who of us can forget the intoxication and rapture with which we made friends with these truths? . . . I only say this to my idealist friends, whether Indian or European, that for every passage they can find in the speeches or writings of these great teachers of wisdom, I will find them a dozen passages in which, in the language of Burke, the warning is given—'How weary a step do those take who endeavour to make out of a great mass a true political personality!'"

After referring to a saying about Sir Henry Lawrence, that "no one ever sat at his table without learning to think more kindly of the natives," Mr. Morley added:—

"India is perhaps the one country—bad manners, overbearing manners are very disagreeable in all countries—India is the only country where bad and overbearing manners are a political crime."

Introduction

Towards the end of the summer there had been some local riots and disturbances in Southern India because at Cocanada, on the coast north of Madras, an Englishman was accused of having beaten a Hindu boy for shouting "Bande Mataram." He was sentenced to a small fine (£10, including damages), and was acquitted on appeal. But this autumn, unhappily, Indian opinion was further inflamed by the results of two trials in private cases held before British juries in the Punjab. In Lahore a British journalist was accused of having shot his bearer dead, after kicking him out of the house, revolver in hand, and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, the jury finding that death was accidental. In the other case, at Rawal Pindi, a British assistant station-master and a Mohammedan porter admitted to having in turn outraged a Hindu woman, who was waiting for a train and was enticed into the stationmaster's room by threats and pretended information about a telegram. Both were acquitted by the jury on a plea of "consent."

In November of this year, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, veteran champion of India's cause before the English people, returned to spend his last days in a quiet place on the coast near Bombay. Born a Bombay Parsi in 1825, he had first gone to live in England just before the Mutiny, but had often returned to official or other work in Baroda and

Bombay. He was a member of the first Indian National Congress at its inauguration in Bombay (1885), and in the next year stood as Liberal candidate for Holborn, on which occasion Lord Salisbury told the electors he could not believe they would vote for a "black man." Nevertheless, he was Liberal member for Central Finsbury from 1892 to 1895, being the first Indian in the House of Commons. In 1892 he was President of the Congress held at Lahore, and in 1906, in spite of his great age, he consented to be President of the Congress held at Calcutta, because it was felt that the reverence with which he was regarded by all Indians would avert the danger of open rupture between the moderate and extremist parties.

This bare summary of events may, perhaps, be useful for reference, and I think it will enable readers of the following pages better to understand the subjects of public interest that were occupying the attention of educated Indians and of Anglo-Indians when I arrived at Bombay in October, 1907, as correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* and other papers.

I owe my hearty thanks to all Anglo-Indian and Indian officials and friends who gave me ungrudging assistance during my visit, and especially to Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe, lately editor of the *Statesman* in Calcutta, for reading my proofs and giving me the advantage of his exceptional knowledge.

CHAPTER I

A Servant of India

It was the Indian festival of Diwali, held at Poona on Guy Fawkes' Day, and celebrated with innumerable flames, like our own thanksgiving for the protection of King and Parliament. But, in feeling, the Diwali comes nearer to Christmastide, for it has no political significance, and the flames are not lighted as a defiance to the Pope of Rome, but in honour of Lakshmi, the goddess of family prosperity, who provides wealth sufficient for us, and holds a baby to the breast above her heart.

So brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, cousins to the tenth removal, were gathered together in the joy of a kinship that regards the smallest trace of common blood as absolute and unquestioned claim to lifelong support under a common roof. No Workhouse or Industrial School for them! As long as one of the kin has pancakes and a cow, there is always a certainty of a crumb and a sup of milk all round. In honour of such riches and family love, the ceilings of the rooms

and the verandahs fluttered with pink and yellow flags; the windows and doors were hung with festoons of orange marigolds on a string; upon the entrance pavement neat patterns in whitewash were drawn by hand-rollers; and, as the streets turned blue with evening, the children, draped in all the gorgeous crimsons and golds their mothers could afford, lighted the tiny oil lamps on window-sill and doorstep, or threw the spurting fires under the very noses of sacred bulls that wander for their living from shop to shop. To be sure, other helpful powers beside Lakshmi have a share in the honour (for who can tell under which form he loves God best?), and it is the temples of Durga and Vishnu, of Siva and Parvati, lady of the far-off mountain snow, that make the sacred hill of Parbati outside the city sparkle like an illuminated birthday cake, for at least one night during the Diwali feast of brotherhood.

The sad thing was that in the beautiful streets where Mahratta nobles had built their simple palaces under the Peshwas a century ago, many of the houses now stood dark and empty, in terror of the plague. Hardly eleven years had passed since the pestilence first appeared, imported from Hongkong as people thought, and in those eleven years it had killed nearly six millions of India's inhabitants. Six millions out of three hundred millions may not sound very much; it is only two in every hundred spread over eleven years.

A STREET IN POONA.

[Face p. 32.

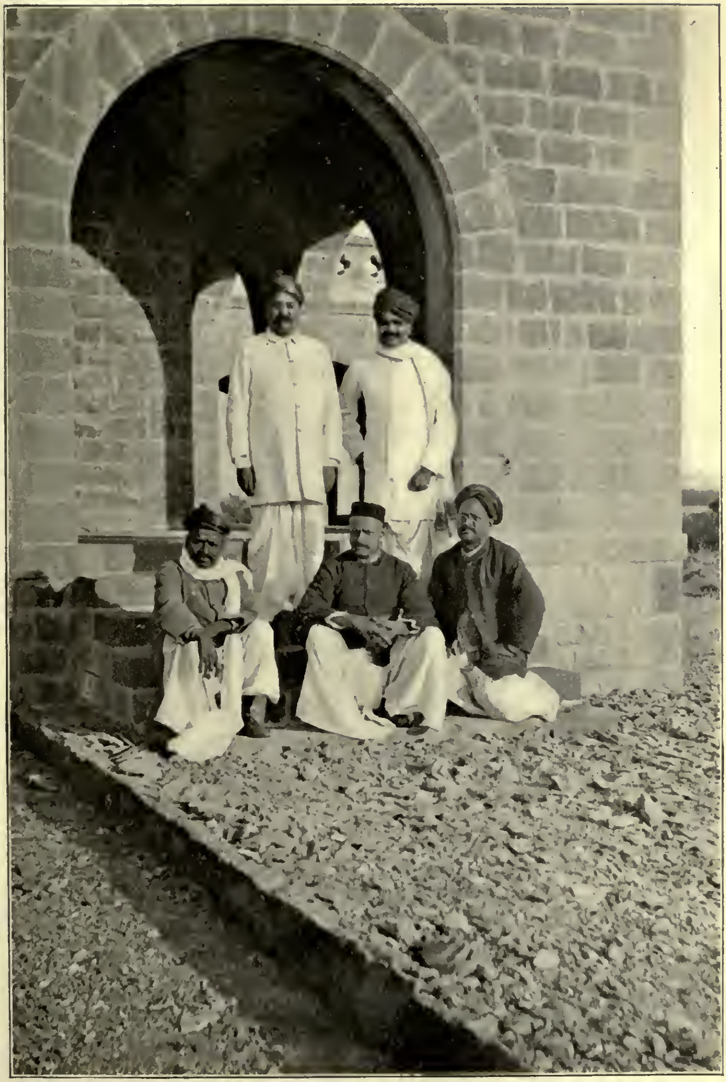
But the loss was not equally distributed, and when I was told that within those eleven years the inhabitants of Poona had been reduced to nearly one-third, I knew why so many homes were dark on a night of lamps and family affection. At the time, the plague was striking down from twelve to fifteen, or at the highest twenty, so that its visitation was regarded as light. But I remember the panic when a single case was reported in London, or even at the more comfortable distance of Marseilles, and so it was natural to find that many families had gone to live on selected open spaces outside the city. There among rocks and withered grass they kindled their little lamps and celebrated family joy in any hut of wicker, matting, canvas, petroleum tins, old boxes, boards, or branches which they and the Imperial Government could manage to rig up between them. Many shopmen had even transferred their little stores of grain, sweets, and cottons to this countrified scene, and the general effect was like a scrappy Derby Day without the races.

Having crossed a bridge, to the left of which thin columns of smoke still rose from the smouldering bodies of yesterday's dead, I passed through one of these Health Camps, as official language fondly calls them, and found before me a partly finished building of solid stone—unfinished, but with something already monastic and grave in its straight-roofed hall and line of cloistral habitations. It was the rising

home of the "Servants of India Society," and in front of his own small house the founder and "First Member" of the Society was standing to receive me.

Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale is one of the very few Indians whose name is known in England to a certain number of people outside the score or two that pay attention to Indian affairs. Born a Mahratta Brahman of the highest caste and of ordinary poverty in the small town of Kolhapur, he threw away the caste and retained the poverty. While a student at the Elphinstone College in Bombay, he came under the influence of Justice Ranade, also a Mahratta Brahman and judge of the High Court, famous already for social reform, and at that time combining with others to establish the National Congress, which held its first meeting in 1885. Mr. Gokhale had taken his degree the year before. Lord Ripon had just left the country, honoured and regretted among Indians as no other Viceroy has been, and the air was full of schemes for political emancipation under the favour and encouragement of British statesmen. Among the reformers of that time, when all were moderate, Ranade was distinguished for moderation, and when Mr. Gokhale in his student days chose him as his "guru," or spiritual guide, he fixed for life his own characteristics of moderation, and a certain sweet reasonableness, not only of manner, but of aim.

It is common to say of a dead politician that



MR. GOKHALE AND SERVANTS OF INDIA. [*Face p.* 34.

he was devoted heart and soul to the service of his country, and, happily, it is sometimes true, even though that devoted service has been crowned by honours, fame, and riches. But of Mr. Gokhale who is still alive, I would say that for every day of his manhood he has had no motive but his country's service, from the day of his appointment on a salary of £60 a year as teacher of history and economics at the Fergusson College in Poona up to his retirement in 1902 on a pension of £20 a year, and onward through the last six years of labour, vilification, and heated controversy. Not a great speaker, and making no attempt at emotional eloquence at a time when oratory counted for much more in India than it does now—a man who has never even contemplated any popular arts except his own inevitable politeness, he has won his influence upon his country's future simply by unreserved devotion and integrity of life. At a moment of intense excitement during the plague riots in Poona, when Mr. Rand and Lieut. Ayerst were shot by Damodar Chapekar and his brothers as they drove into the city from Government House (June 22, 1897), he, being then in England, published charges against the method of plague-observation by British soldiers, which on his return he discovered were not supported by the promised evidence, and he offered an open apology to Lord Sandhurst and the Army. Amidst an infuriated

public opinion, which believed the charges to be not only true, but below the truth, few could have lived down such a retractation. But Mr. Gokhale lived it down.

When the National Congress met at Benares in December, 1905, just after the partition of Bengal, he was elected President as the safest guide in a crisis of extreme difficulty and increasing indignation. Mr. John Morley had just received his appointment to the India Office, and a few lines from Mr. Gokhale's presidential address may be quoted to show the hopes and fears of the time :—

> "Large numbers of educated men in this country feel towards Mr. Morley as towards a Master, and the heart hopes and yet trembles. He, the reverent student of Burke, the disciple of Mill, the friend and biographer of Gladstone, will he courageously apply their principles and his own to the government of this country, or will he too succumb to the influences of the India Office, and thus cast a blight on hopes which his own writings have done so much to foster? In any case his appointment indicates how favourable to our cause the attitude of the new Ministry is."

For two or three years past Mr. Gokhale had represented the Presidency of Bombay as one of the elected Indians upon the Viceroy's Legislative Council, and when I first met him at Poona, as I have described, he had just returned from the Council at Simla, in which the Seditious Meetings

Bill was approved.* Before the Viceroy and the rest of the British majority, he had opposed the Bill with a restrained but overwhelming plea for the common rights of freedom, as English people understand them. In one significant passage, after referring to "the malignant activity of certain unscrupulous correspondents" who had recently been trying to lash the British public into a panic by false versions of events and private utterances, he added :—

"The saddest part of the whole thing is that the Secretary of State for India has fallen a victim to these grievous misrepresentations. Possessing no personal knowledge of the people of this country, and overwhelmed with a sense of the vast responsibilities of his office, he has allowed his vision to be obscured, and his sense of proportion to be warped. From time to time he has let fall ominous hints in the House of Commons, and more than once he has spoken as though some great trouble were brewing in India and the country were on the eve of a dark disaster. My Lord, in these circumstances the passing of a Bill like the present, and in such hot haste, is bound to have the effect of confirming the false impression which has been already created in England, and this cannot fail to intensify and deepen still further the sense of injustice and injury, and the silent resentment with which my countrymen have been watching the course of events during the last few months."

Here, on the edge of the rocky country west

* See Introduction, p. 25.

of Poona, close beside the Fergusson College for Indians, with which he had been so long connected, he had laid the foundation of his "Servants of India Society" two years before, and in the two-roomed cells about a dozen Knights of the Order were already living. They were men prepared, in the language of the Society's rules, "to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit, and to promote, by all constitutional means, the national interests of the Indian people." The object of the Society is to train the Servants as national missionaries, ready to visit any part of India at the order of the First Member and Council, in the hope of creating a deep and passionate love of the country, organizing political teaching, promoting goodwill among the different races, assisting education, especially of women, and raising the people who live below even the lowest caste.

Each Servant of India remains under close training for five years, but out of the five years he spends two in visiting various parts of India, so as to know the people's needs at first hand. Even when his novitiate is complete, he is required to live two months every year in the Headquarters, and, like the Monastic Orders, all the members take vows—to give their best to the service of the country; to earn no money for themselves and seek no personal advantage; to regard all Indians as brothers, without distinction of caste or creed; to

engage in no personal quarrel; and to lead a pure personal life. In this Order, as in other similar societies throughout India, there is a growing tendency to celibate consecration, like the Roman priesthood's. But the last vow does not exclude marriage. In fact, there is a provision that every member under training shall have his personal expenses borne by the Society, but be granted £2 a month for his family, if he has one, and that after his novitiate the full member shall bear the expenses of himself and family out of a grant of £3 6*s*. 8*d*. (Rs. 50) a month, with an extra allowance for the insurance of each child as it comes.

The merely learned side of the Order is represented by a large library, already containing rows on rows of the many great books that Indians and Englishmen have written on India, together with a selection from the history of liberty in all countries. That is the library's distinction. Beginning with England herself, and passing right down the glorious roll to the Russia of 1905, it has here collected the long record of man's gradual and hard-won conquest of freedom.

Social reform is certainly one side of the Society's work. To free the laborious peoples of India from the bondage they lay on themselves in harassing ritual, immature marriages, exclusion from life's decencies of some fifty millions, who eat dead animals and think they commit mortal sin if their

shadow touches a Brahman—to free the common people gradually from these obsolete ways, and to spread among them the first inkling of knowledge, for which the Government does not yet afford the money—these are objects common to most Indian reformers, and natural under the tradition of Ranade. Such purposes are missionary in the ordinary sense, like the efforts of our missionary societies or university settlements. Only those who are dubious about all missionary efforts could criticize them. I am dubious myself, only because no one has ever deliberately missionized me without driving me further into sin, if only as a relief from his presence. For I keep in my mind that saying of Thoreau's :—

> "If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life as from that dry and parching wind of the African deserts, called the simoom, which fills the mouth and nose and ears and eyes with dust till you are suffocated, for fear I should get some of his good done to me—some of its virus mingled with my blood."

But I think the cause of all this peril and terror really lies, not in the good that might be done to myself, but in a certain disintegration in the missionary nature, an over-maturity or staleness of virtue that rots the good before I get it. If it were possible for the missionary spirit to move on the same insecure plane of pitfalls with me,

unconscious of any salutary purpose beyond its own difficult salvation, one might possibly escape its virus without running in the opposite direction.

That is why the frankly political side of the Society is so welcome. Politics, being less intimate to the soul, appear less dangerous for a teacher than social reform or philanthropy, in which some kind of moral or class superiority is nearly always assumed. Regarding the Society's attitude towards the British Government, I had better quote from its own little book of rules :—

> "Its members frankly accept the British connection, as ordained, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, for India's good. Self-government on the lines of the English colonies is their goal. This goal, they recognize, cannot be attained without years of earnest and patient work and sacrifice worthy of the cause."

Many have smiled over that "inscrutable dispensation of Providence." Naturally, I took it for irony myself, though I felt that irony was out of tune with the Society's regulations. But it is not irony. Mr. Gokhale's nature is too direct, his purpose too simple in its intensity, for the ironic bypaths.

I was dining that night with such of the Servants of India as had not gone home for the family festival. Mr. Paranjbye was there too—Senior Wrangler of his year, Fellow of St. John's, present Head of the

Fergusson College close by, famous among European mathematicians, and almost tolerated in the Anglo-Indian society of Poona for his skill at lawn tennis. Mr. Kelkar had come as well—editor of the *Mahratta*, a leader in the Extremist camp, Mr. Tilak's vigilant captain. And a few more Brahmans and others sat with us, not too sacrificial in purity to eat beside a carnivorous European. That "inscrutable dispensation" was discussed amid laughter, but Mr. Gokhale retained his accustomed serenity. He had written the words with entire seriousness. The dispensations of Providence were inscrutable, but still he believed the British connection was ordained for India's good. It had secured various things which any one could count, but above all it had instilled into the Indian nature a love of freedom and a self-assertion against authority that Indians used to lack, but English people often possess in enviable abundance.

I remember quoting the common opinion that Anglo-Indians have lost sympathy with Indians because they no longer make India their home, but keep one eye on England and are always on the flit. But Mr. Gokhale disagreed. He thought it an advantage that fewer English people now settled in the country. The fairly permanent residents, like shopkeepers and planters, were as a rule the worst mannered and most domineering, and they took hardly any part in public life. The standard of manners in

general, he thought, had gone down. It might be that, in old days, the Englishman found it easier to be sympathetic with natives whom he could treat as dear good things. But educated Indians had come to detest such sympathy as only fit for pet animals, and both races were beginning to notice the change. For his part, he thought that since Lord Ripon left India in 1884, the type of Englishman that came out had slowly been declining.

"It is unfortunate," he said, "that our Congress movement should have coincided with the past twenty-two years of violent reaction and Imperialism in England. You can hardly imagine how intolerable our life became at the time of the Boer war. The insolence of Anglo-Indian papers, like the *Englishman* or the *Civil and Military Gazette* towards our people goes beyond all bounds. Yet the *Civil and Military Gazette*, which is the worst offender, has only received a mild remonstrance from the Lieut.-Governor of the Punjab, while the editors of Indian papers are in gaol.* Such treatment, however, is the inevitable penalty of a conquered race, and, I think, within the last year manners have mended a little. Lord Minto, at all events, is very much the gentleman himself.

"During the last three years of Lord Curzon's time," he continued, "we were kept in a state of perpetual irritation. Then came our high hopes from the Liberal Party, and our violent disappointment. The worst of all is that many people are beginning to lose faith in English integrity and sense of justice—the two main qualities that could be used for the maintenance of your power. It is a

* See Introduction, p. 17.

new thing, but our young men are beginning to ask what is the good of constitutional agitation if it only results in insult and the Partition of Bengal? That is how Extremists are created. There are two schools of them now, one here in Poona, the other in Bengal itself, and Anglo-Indians are always calling upon us to denounce them. But we are not likely to denounce a section of our own people in face of the bureaucracy. For, after all, they have in view the same great object as ourselves."

For himself, I discovered many months afterwards that Mr. Gokhale hated the name of Moderate, as, I suppose, all beings of flesh and blood needs must. But, for brief, one has to call by some such name the party which continues in patience and hope to believe that appeals to justice and reason may still induce the English people to grant reform.

For the Simla scheme, recently put out by Mr. Morley for criticism,* no Indian whom I met had anything to say, except Mr. Gokhale alone, who thought he detected one or two minor points that might possibly be of advantage. He condemned the Imperial Advisory Council entirely, as sure to produce a body of half-educated ruling chiefs and territorial magnates, powerless to stand against any Government proposal, and unlikely to be summoned except to discuss a royal visit, a statue, a famine, or the plague. But from the Provincial Advisory Councils he thought something might possibly be

* Introduction, p. 22.

gained, if at least half the members were elected on a high franchise and were bound to meet for the discussion of definite local subjects so many times a year.

The attempt to clutch at any possible chance of good was characteristic of the man. With all his power he repels the temptation to sulky aloofness, always a strong temptation to enthusiasts in opposition. It is true he could find nothing to say for the Simla proposal of enlarging the Viceroy's Legislative Council from twenty-four to fifty-three, by packing it with representatives of Chambers of Commerce, Mohammedans, and landowners. Such a scheme was too obviously only an attempt to crush down the influence of the education which has been one of England's greatest gifts to India. It was a reversal of all British policy, which had hitherto set itself to depress the landlord gentry and men of wealth who "have a stake in the country," and to stand as protector of the poor. The whole thing was too evidently framed in the spirit of fear and not of progress. But nevertheless, in Mr. Gokhale's own scheme of reforms, an enlargement of the Legislative Councils is a prominent clause. That and some genuine control over the Budget by representative Indians on the Viceroy's Council would start the reform of political machinery. In other departments the old cry for complete separation of judicial and and executive functions must be listened to, so that

even the lower officials in districts should never act both as prosecutor and judge. In the same public services, Indians should be granted an improved position in accordance with Queen Victoria's Proclamation, * and, above all, the teaching of children should be gradually extended till it became free and compulsory, even in villages. There were a few other points in Mr. Gokhale's programme of immediate reform. But in none could I discover a trace of that vagueness and impracticable demand, that "crying for the moon," of which Mr. Morley and other critics of Indian demands were then complaining. †

I met Mr. Gokhale many times again — in Poona itself, Surat, Bombay, and London—and his reasonable and open-hearted personality will often re-appear in this record. But to myself I still picture him on that Diwali evening in the refectory where the Servants of India were gathered round him, together with friends from both the main Parties of the time. In concession to my outlandish habits, I was allowed a table, chair, and spoon at dinner. But the sons of the country sat on boards level with the floor, their backs against the walls, and in front of each of us was laid half a plantain or banana leaf, neatly studded round the edge with little piles of rice, beans and other seeds, flavours, sauces and other condiments, together with thin wheaten cakes.

* Introduction, p. 6.

† Introduction, p. 28.

Which when we had eaten, and drunk clean water from round brazen vessels such as all Indians carry when they walk, we washed up by burning the plantain leaves, rinsed our hands, and continued the discussion over pomegranate seeds, orange cloves, and pan-leaves concealing beetel-nut and various spice. Serene, modest, definite in aim and in knowledge, he continued to discourse with us, until the full moon rolled westward, and under her obscure silence I returned to the city of the plague, where the oil lamps were now extinguished, and the children asleep.

CHAPTER II

Rats and Men

The bubonic plague, as I said, had been known in India for only eleven years, but from the first the common people had noticed its connection with rats. The sight of a dead rat in a house spread terror, and when rats crept out upon the floors, regardless of man, and lay panting to death, it was early recognized that the plague was at hand. The unlearned observed these warnings, but no one detected their full significance, and for many years the pestilence was attributed to bad water or overcrowded and insanitary houses.

In Poona it was thought there was too much water about, and the officer of health undertook the remedial measure of draining a rather nice pond that used to be behind the Deccan Club, and converting it into as malarial a marsh as I have ever seen outside West Africa. The authorities, in their perplexity, also set about cleansing the quarters and homes of the Indian population, who, I suppose, are, on the whole, the most scrupulous

about washing and cleaning of any working people in the world. They tried disinfectants, and poured thousands of pounds in the form of chemicals down drains, ditches, and streets. Sometimes, by mistake, they poured things that do not disinfect, and still the plague went on. They tried "segregation." They divided the city into compartments under military guard, and sent British soldiers into the homes to examine men, women, and children, and take them off to isolated hospitals if there was a sign of plague. The symptom from which the plague takes its name of "bubonic" is the swelling of the great glands in the groin into hard lumps. No greater profanation of the Indian reverence for home and women could be imagined than this forcible entrance and examination by men—by soldiers of another race. No matter how kindly and decent and respectful our men were, no virtue on their part could prevent their presence and action from infuriating any population, especially in an Asiatic town. Riots broke out, and when I was in Poona, a small stone was put up to mark the spot on the country road to Government House, where the Chairman of the Plague Committee had been murdered, together with a young officer who happened to be with him. When the youth who conceived the deed was sentenced, he said to the judge, "You may hang me to-morrow, but my soul will at once pass into another body, and in

sixteen years it will be fighting against the English again."

The kindly zeal, the strenuous measures, the fatherly concern, the haste to do something, the utter inability to understand another point of view, are alike characteristic of our Government and of the elephant that sat on the orphaned eggs to hatch them.

From that time, I believe, arose a peculiar bitterness and feeling of distrust towards our rule that slowly permeated the country, and are still particularly strong in Poona itself. But their origin is distant now, and when I was there all our old methods had long been abandoned. There was now no examination for suspected cases, and no military searching of houses. The people were not "segregated," and general disinfection was given up. Inoculation and "health camps" had become the Government methods now. The object of inoculation was the same as similar processes in other diseases, like smallpox or typhoid; the object of the "health camps" was simply to separate human beings from rats.

That old connection between rats and plague had lately been examined afresh, chiefly by Dr. Turner, the Public Health Officer in Bombay, and the theory of the rat-flea had sprung into science. Contemplate a dead rat lying on your floor in the day-time, and you will find numerous fleas leaping

A Health Camp.

In a Village.

[Face p. 50.

up and down upon his body. If you are wise and prudent, you will rapidly pour kerosene over him from a distance, and then set him alight. For if, having seen him brewing in the air, you do not thus nip him in the bud, you are likely to fall a victim to the plague after sunset. A rat's fleas are not the harmless, homely insects that we know. This species of flea has a special predilection for rats, and they will not leave their favourite home if they can help it, at all events by day. At night, when the rat is dead, they have to go, and then, as a last resort, they will take refuge on a human body for want of better sustenance. But with them they bring the germ that has killed the rat.

Whether they themselves infect the rat in the first instance, or whether they only transmit from him a bacillus which the rat has developed from other origins, I have not discovered ; but I suppose the latter. Nor am I quite sure whether the fleas die of plague themselves or remain immune. Anyhow, the theory is that when once they have passed the germ into a human being's blood, the plague is assured. In a climate like India's the most careful and cleanly people can never be secure against fleas, for, wash as they will, some insect or other is pretty certain to be biting them every minute of the day and night, and it is difficult to distinguish one bite from another. A further terror is that the little grey squirrel with paler stripes, which draws no

distinction of race or riches, and swarms throughout India, even on the roofs of the wealthiest bungalows, is quite as much a favourite with the fleas as any rat could be. While I was in Poona they were climbing over my verandah and scampering across my floor by dozens, and I took a peculiarly personal interest in their health, which happily appeared excellent.

The British Government was, at the time, buying rats alive at some fraction of a farthing a head. They had already purchased 25,000 in the town when I was there, and everywhere one met industrious Hindus carrying rats in cages to the official rat-collector. Whether the price was high enough to induce industrious Hindus to breed rats for the British market, I do not know. But I believe it was found that the reduction of the rat population gave the survivors such increased vitality that never had such active and powerful specimens of rat been seen before.

There is no very strict rule about the season for plague. Sometimes it comes in the rains, sometimes in the drought. Usually it is worst at the end of winter, but in 1907, when nearly 70,000 people died in a week in the Punjab, it was approaching the height of summer. As a rule the season lasts three months, and in bad seasons at Poona the cases go up to 100 a day. While I was there, the rate, as I said above, was comparatively low—only 12, 15, or 20 cases a day. But in the Presidency of Bombay, as a

whole, people were dying by 7000 a week, and that seems a good deal, even though the population of the provinces is 18,000,000, including Scinde. The British Isles count for more than twice that number, but if we began dying of plague by 7000 a week, I dare say there would arise such a commotion for escape as when you stir up an ants' nest with a stick.

In Poona the Government had erected rows of tin huts as a hospital on some vacant ground just beyond the railway station, and there I was able to observe cases of the pestilence in every stage. There were from 80 to 100 men, women, and children admitted as patients, and the men and women were laid in separate rows. But otherwise not much difference could be made between the patients as to caste and habits, though some of the Brahmans had their food sent in from outside when they were recovering, like first-class misdemeanants in our prisons. It is rather peculiar that the Brahmans offer least resistance to the disease, and this the Sister-in-charge attributed to the strictness of their vegetarianism for ages past. To Europeans it is less fatal than to any Indians, but, next to Europeans, the lowest or "sweeper" caste, who will eat anything anyhow, almost like Europeans themselves, are the best patients, and show the most recoveries. There may, however, be other reasons for this difference besides the

food—I mean the natural hardiness of the labouring class, and the natural tendency of all highly organized and sensitive beings to collapse under fever.

Each patient in hospital lay in a separate cubicle, and mothers or other relations were allowed to visit and sit there. A plague-stricken mother might, I believe, even bring a young child with her, so great was the confidence in the new theory of infection and in the absence of rats. The stories of instant and unavoidable contagion in other plagues, such as the plague of London, seem to separate those diseases in kind from this bubonic plague; but very likely the stories were not true, or what was considered to be contagion was in reality an underlying common origin.

It was some comfort to a mother to be allowed to watch her thin, bright-eyed child panting its life away, but the absorbed intensity of her watching, as a rule, had not to continue long. The disease begins with violent headache and a rapidly increasing temperature; the breath becomes terrible, and the tongue chalky white or bluish. There is a strong objection to taking food or drink, and milk is often spat out by a spasm in the throat, as in hydrophobia. Delirium supervenes about the third day and usually lasts to the sixth, when most patients die. During the delirium there is an extreme desire to get up and walk about, so that many patients have to be strapped down to their

beds. Far the most important thing is to keep the patient absolutely still, as death most frequently comes from collapse of the heart, and recovery depends almost entirely upon the patient's constitutional power of heart action. An English lady, who had come through the disease, told me that even during the delirium she seemed to be dimly conscious of the strain on the heart ; but this memory may have been only suggestion. I think the delirious patients that I saw would be incapable of remembering anything of those three days, even if they recovered.

Meantime, in their benign efforts to work off the poison in the blood, the glands have from a very early stage developed into hard lumps that usually suppurate and have to be incised, but sometimes absorb without operation. When I touched the glands in the groin, they felt like walnuts under the skin, and it is, as I said, the presence of this obvious symptom which gives the plague its characteristic name of "bubonic," from the Greek word for groin. After incision, the patient's temperature often goes down rapidly, but, in any case, the pain from the glands is usually very great ; indeed, I think it is the chief cause of such pain as the plague gives.

Next to heart failure, the commonest cause of death is lung complication after the crisis of fever is passed. The prostration when the temperature

begins to decline is usually extreme, and some patients whom I saw were so emaciated that they appeared to be parodies of famine—legs and arms like sticks, back and ribs like frameworks of bone. It is true that probably they were not very fat when they went into hospital. The delirium often leaves the patients silly, and if I had been in Central Africa again, I should have said at once that several of them had sleeping sickness in the third or fourth month—the time when, in sleeping sickness, the control over the emotions begins to fail. The nurses in the hospital were Indian women, under the direction of a European Sister.*

* For the sake of comparison it may be of interest to quote a few of the symptoms given in descriptions of other plagues. The account by Thucydides (ii. 49) of the plague in Athens, 430 B.C., is the most detailed: "All of a sudden," he says, "people who were quite well before were seized with violent pains in the head, together with redness and inflammation of the eyes; the throat and tongue became blood-red, and the breath strangely disagreeable. Sneezing and sore throat ensued, and after a short time the lungs were affected and there was violent coughing. When the disease settled in the stomach it caused great disorder, with every known kind of purging of bile, accompanied by severe pain. Most patients suffered from an empty retching, with violent spasms, that sometimes gave relief at once, sometimes only after a long time. The surface of the body was not very hot to touch, nor was it pale, but suffused red or livid, covered with small spots and ulcers. But the internal heat was so great that the patients could not endure even the lightest clothes or muslins, but insisted on being naked, and longed to throw themselves into cold water. Many who were not looked after actually jumped into wells, overcome with unquenchable thirst; but it was just the same whether a patient drank much or little. All through the illness they were unable to keep still or get any sleep. Whilst the fever was at its height the body did not waste away, but

Similar Plagues

While I was still in Poona, Sir George Clarke, the new Governor of Bombay, who was already winning the confidence and respect of Indians in all parties by his straightforward ways and his freedom

resisted the disease beyond all expectation, so that most patients died from the internal fever on the seventh or ninth day with a good deal of strength still left ; or, if they survived the crisis, the disease descended to the bowels, where it set up ulceration and such violent diarrhœa that in most cases death ensued from weakness."

The chief symptoms given by Boccaccio in the Introduction to the "Decameron," where he describes the plague in Florence (1348), are : "At the beginning of the disease both men and women developed swellings in the groin or under the armpit. These swellings grew to the size of a crab-apple or an egg, sometimes larger, sometimes less, and the common people called them 'gavoccioli.' In a short time this deadly sore began to spread to all parts of the body, and the nature of the disease gradually changed into black or livid spots, which appeared on the arms and thighs and other parts, sometimes large and scattered, sometimes minute and thick together." He goes on to speak of the entire inability of doctors to deal with the plague, and of the readiness with which the smallest association or contagion spread it from one to another.

Defoe wrote only at secondhand about the plague of London (1665), but such symptoms as he gives of that "spotted fever" were probably taken from eye-witnesses with whom he had conversed. He mentions violent pains in the head, vomitings, and spots on the thighs ; also "swellings, generally in the neck and groin, which, when they grew hard and would not break, grew so painful that it was equal to the most exquisite torture. . . . In some these swellings were made hard, partly by the force of the distemper, and partly by their being too violently drawn, and were so hard that no instrument could cut them, and then they burnt them with caustics, so that many died raving mad in the torment, and some in the very operation. In these distresses, some for want of help to hold them down in their beds, or to look to them, laid hands upon themselves. Some broke out into the streets, perhaps naked, and would run directly down to the river, if they were not stopped by the watchman or other officer, and plunge themselves into the water, wherever they found it."

from official routine, issued a proclamation giving the actual statistics of the plague, and calling on the people to submit themselves voluntarily to inoculation as the only means of defence yet discovered. The proclamation was read about the streets in Mahrati, the people listening patiently, and then reflecting. Many Indians have a feeling against inoculation, just as thousands of English people have. They regard it as some sort of contamination, even when it is voluntary, and the memory of an old error in the serum that poisoned a village dies hard.* There is also a certain amount of national and even religious prejudice on the subject. The thing is European; it does not fit in with Hindu tradition, and Mr. Tilak, the most powerful political and religious force in Poona, was known at that time to oppose it. Still, it had been proved that, as a rule, no great harm was done, and, on the off-chance that it might save their lives, many took it. For inoculation there was the further inducement of sixpence bestowed on each patient by a considerate Government, so as to tide over the two or three days' gentle illness that usually follows the operation.

It naturally occurs to one that many a poor but dishonest man would gladly be inoculated every day of his life for sixpence, or would, at all events,

* In 1902, nineteen died from this cause at Mulkowal, a village in the Punjab, and the Punjab Government abandoned the hope of inoculation for the time.

A Village Street.

A Street in Plague.

[*Face p.* 58.

induce his wife and children thus to contribute to the family budget. Very likely that happens from time to time in the case of far-seeing people who are resolved to avail themselves fully of the Government's prophylactic measures. But some real check upon this form of prudence is imposed by the appearance of the arm, and an official check is also kept by an elaborate system of finger-print records—one of the most official farces I have ever seen. Even more embarrassing, however, than the thrifty man is he who, feeling rather unwell, hastens up to be inoculated, and is found to be developing the plague already. Of course, nothing will persuade him that his visit to the inoculator was not the cause of the disease, and much suspicion is spread in this way among the people. It is, in any case, extremely difficult to induce women to take the inoculation. Everything possible is done to shelter their feelings; a most discreet curtain is hung to protect them from sight and make them feel at home; one of their own people is the operator, and only an inch or two of arm is exposed, whereas they never have the slightest objection to walking in the crowd with legs and waist quite bare at any hour of the day. Yet the whole traditional instinct of Indian womanhood, from the day of Sita, Rama's wife, rises up in protest against such a profanation.

At four separate points of the native city the Government had set up stations where all comers

might be inoculated free—not only free, but with that sixpenny reward. In the midst of the central market-place, where elderly bangle-merchants, with the help of soapy powder, were squeezing gorgeous glass bangles from China over women's hands, and men and women were squatted on the stones, chaffering over little heaps of queer vegetables and fruit, I found a native apostle of science and fatherly Government preaching the terrors of plague and the glory of redemption by serum. Before him was fixed a little spirit stove, on which boiling vaseline simmered. At his side was a glass saucer containing scraps of cotton wool dipped in strong carbolic. One hand gesticulated the truths of nature, the other held a little glass syringe, with a long, sharp beak, and any one could see that the syringe was half full of yellow salvation. Under the mingled influences of rhetoric and fear of death, a man stepped forward from the listening half-circle. With the carbolic wool the expositor washed the dust from the thin brown arm, told the patient to admire an imaginary bird in the opposite direction, just like a Margate photographer with a child, and plunged the sharp-nosed syringe first into the boiling vaseline and then under the brown skin. Instantly it was withdrawn, but a drop or two of the yellow salvation had gone, and for three or four months—say, for the length of one plague season, but only for that—the man was fairly safe. The crowd sighed its satisfaction, as

when a rocket bursts. The place on the arm was wiped with carbolic wool. "Take his thumb mark, give him the paper of instructions, pay him his six annas," said the apostle of bacillary science in Mahrati to a subordinate, and the labour of a fatherly Government struggling with adversity went doggedly on.

CHAPTER III

The Extremist

I knew it would come. Till I had been some time in Bombay, I did not realize the custom, but the moment I realized it, I felt there was no escape. As often happens with forebodings, it came unexpectedly in the end. I was visiting the simple house, workshop, and garden, in a main street of Poona, where the two Extremist papers are published. Both appear weekly—the *Mahratta* in English, the *Kesari* or *Lion* in the Mahrati language. Both are owned and directed by Mr. Tilak, the acknowledged leader of the Extremists in India, but the *Mahratta* was edited by Mr. Kelkar, an intellectual, keen-tempered Brahman, who accompanied me over the printing office and showed me a courteous friendliness all through my stay in Poona. Both papers have obtained what is thought a large circulation in India—the *Mahratta* selling 1·1,000 a week, the *Kesari* close upon twice that number. In outward appearance, the *Mahratta* is very much like the *Spectator*. The *Kesari*, with

lions in emblem defiant on each side of the title, is on cheaper paper of eight folded pages. Its language is said to be more violent than the *Mahratta's*, which as a rule is carefully moderate in expression.

In the cool and quiet of the editor's room, among bookshelves mildewing like most Indian libraries, I was listening to the history of the papers when I observed a crowd of brown printers, deferential but eager, at the door. In their hands they bore strange objects, such as I had never before seen, but at a glance I knew the moment had arrived. Advancing to my chair they hung around my neck a thick festoon of orange marigolds, picked out with the silvery tinsel which decorators of our Christmas trees identify with fairy rain. They encircled both my wrists with orange bracelets to match, and in my right hand they placed an arrangement of variegated flowers and spangles, stiff and formal as the sceptre of the Tsar. So I sat enthroned, and if only a correspondent from Calcutta had been present, the broadsheets of London that evening might have screamed with scare-heads of "Sedition!" Even in the midst of my friendly embarrassment, I could not but regret a journalistic opportunity lost.

Embarrassing, certainly it was, but only to my British ignorance and shyness. To complete the Imperial ceremony, my dusky subjects sprinkled

me with delicate odours from silvern vessels; they soused my handkerchief in scent; they rubbed spikenard and aloes on the back of my hands. Then, standing at a distance, they contemplated their handiwork with kindly satisfaction, while I laboured to express my august gratification in an Imperial tongue they could not understand. Every one present knew, and I knew myself, that they would have honoured in the same way any visitor who had come to their works in a benignant spirit. Even when, hung with fillets like a sacrificial victim and bearing the floral sceptre upright in my hand, I issued from the front door into the full blaze of the public street, the passers-by looked at me with admiring interest, but without a trace of laughter. These things are merely habit, and before I left India I lived to dread garlands as little as my bed. But that first time—with what shamefaced horror the consciousness of my British trousers and khaki helmet filled me! Suddenly, with an inexplicable pang, I remembered that I had once rowed two in the Christ Church torpid, and if any of my own countrymen had gone down the street at that moment, I think I should have got under my cart instead of into it.*

Thus ornamented by a graceful hospitality, I drove away, some sixteen miles south-west of the

* Compare the Attis of Catullus, LXIII. 50. "Patria o mei creatrix, patria o mea genetrix . . . Ego gymnasei fui flos," etc.

Mr. Tilak.

[*Face p.* 64.

city, through an irrigated and fertile land of terraced rice-fields, draining the abundant water that rice flourishes in from one level into another. Slowly we drew near a great blue mountain, conspicuous from Poona among the other hills for its height and flat-topped outline. It is the mountain fortress of Singarh, famed in Deccan history. Unknown peoples had made it their rock of defence, Mohammedans had reigned there, Mahrattas took it by storm. Finally the British, some ninety years ago, bombarded the place till it could stand no more, and now all that afternoon I had watched a British helio on its summit blinking messages to the Poona cantonment. There is a long, steep climb before the old fortifications that run round the edge of the cliffs are reached, for the top is as high as Ben Nevis. But passing through a western arch in the walls we entered on the broad grassy plateau while still the low horizon was brilliant with sunset, and against the sunset a red-turbaned, white-clad figure, upright but using a long staff, came to meet me.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak appeared to be about ten years older than Mr. Gokhale, but it is difficult to tell his age, for if ever he takes off his Mahratta turban, one sees his head shaven to the back, where the hair grows in a long, black tuft, as is the fashion of his race or caste. His full, brown eyes are singularly brilliant, steady with daring, rather aggressive

But his general manner is very quiet and controlled, and both in conversation and public speaking he talks in brief, assured sentences, quite free from rhetoric, outwardly passionless even in moments of the highest passion, and seldom going beyond the statement of facts, or, rather, of his aspect of facts at the time. His apparent calmness and self-command may arise partly from courageous indifference to his own future, partly from prolonged legal practice at his own trials. At first one would say, his was the legal mind, subtle, given to fine distinctions, rather capable of expressing thought than of thinking, and quick to adapt both the expression and the thought to the audience of the moment. But there is much in his life and energies that seems to show that his natural bias was towards religious speculation and scholarly traditions.

Among the leading reformers of India, he is probably the most orthodox Hindu. He professes a devout belief in progressive Hinduism and in successive reincarnations of Krishna at epochs of India's greatest need. But in practice his Hinduism often reacts against the forces of progress, and serves him as an ally in resisting the materializing notions imported from the West. In scholarship, he is known among all Sanscrit scholars as one of the closest and most original. His book on "The Arctic Home of the Vedas" maintains from internal evidence that the Sacred Books of India

originated among a glacial people inhabiting the region of the Arctic Circle, or some land equally chilly. I cannot say what the value of the theory may be. Possibly the book is as fantastic as it is learned. But to me it is significant because it appeared in the midst of the author's direst persecution, when money, reputation, influence, and everything were at stake, and few men would have had the courage to spare a thought either for Sacred Books or Arctic Circles.

It is said that he is embittered. One of the highest and best of English officials in India told me he admired Mr. Tilak, and would gladly know him personally, but was afraid of inviting him for fear of a rebuff, so irreconcilable was the man reputed. Yet when the meeting did take place, by a kind of accident some weeks later, there was no rebuff, but only courtesy and openly expressed esteem. Certainly, if a fine nature can ever be embittered, Mr. Tilak has had enough to embitter him. Early in the 'eighties he was imprisoned for speaking against the Diwan or Prime Minister of a Native State, whom he accused of cruelty to the Raja. In September, 1897, he was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment for attacks in the *Kesari* upon the Bombay Government when the population of Poona was frenzied at the plague regulations. After a year in gaol he was released, but soon afterwards he became involved in a private

suit concerned with his trusteeship for a widow named Tai Maharaj and her adoption of an heir. The Bombay Government took up the case, and the trial, with appeals, dragged on for nearly two years, Mr. Tilak being condemned by one magistrate to a long imprisonment and heavy fine. "The paths of scholarship," was the *Pioneer's* comment, "lead but to the gaol," and in Court Mr. Tilak was publicly handcuffed. Finally, in March, 1904, his appeal came before the High Court of Bombay, represented by Chief Justice Sir Lawrence Jenkins and Mr. Justice Batty; the conviction and sentence were quashed and the fine was ordered to be refunded.

This judgment confirmed the common Indian opinion that British justice can best be looked for in the High Courts of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, because the judges appointed directly by the Crown can maintain the law without being unconsciously prejudiced by long service under the Anglo-Indian routine. But, unfortunately, owing to Mr. Tilak's past record, and his connection with the Extremist papers, the ruinous action taken against him had the air of persecution, and laid the Bombay Government open to a charge of vindictiveness. It was during these proceedings that Mr. Tilak displayed his fine unconcern by issuing his treatise on the origin of the Vedas, and in the end, when his innocence was finally established, he found that

a leader's greatest advantage of having suffered for his cause was indefinitely increased.

When I met him that evening on the mountain top, another crisis of his fate was just being decided, but nothing could surpass his outward calm. He was living in one of the dilapidated bungalows thinly scattered over the plateau. I was put to lodge in another empty one, because, belonging, as he does, to the same high caste as Mr. Gokhale, and to the same subsection of it, he refuses, as a strict Hindu, to emancipate himself from the caste obligations and live or eat with mere Europeans. All that night the wind roared over the mountains, but with the first sun he came to lead me round the elaborate ruins of the fortifications, and, as though he had no interest in the world except as tourist's guide, he showed me where the British guns had battered, and where, in the time of the Mahratta hero, Shivaji, two hundred and forty years ago, his own ancestors crept up the precipice at night and scaled this very wall, aided by a great lizard that was trained to carry a string up the surface and hold tight with its claws till a man could climb. So at this dizzy spot the party had climbed; then killed.

It is easy to perceive the marvels of the past, and belief in them is unimportant. But to realize the strange significance of the man at my side, and to understand the things he believed in at the

moment was a different matter. He continued to discourse about the villages half hidden in the deep valleys below, and narrate their sufferings, hopes, and varying prosperity as if he had no further thought on earth beyond their cattle and their rice. But I knew that at Nagpur in the Central Provinces, things had just been happening which deeply involved himself and his party. The annual meeting of the National Congress was to have been held there at Christmas. The Reception Committee had met to appoint a President, and the Moderates of the majority chose Dr. Rash Behari Ghose. Thereupon, the Extremists, insisting upon their majority in the Central Provinces and in the Executive Committee, chose Mr. Tilak. He in turn proposed Mr. Lajpat Rai, as a compromise ; but, with his usual chivalry, Mr. Lajpat Rai refused to stand rather than risk a division among the reform party, or an open breach between the Congress and the Government. To be sure, deeper questions of principle or of method lay behind these personal disputes, but on the personal question of the President the Nagpur meeting had just broken up in disorder. The Moderates had determined not to hold the Congress at Nagpur at all, but to accept the invitation of Surat, only a few hours' journey north of Bombay, which was the headquarters of the strongest section among them.

Compared to the wild adventures of his Mahratta ancestry, or to the economic conditions of the peasants far below us, one might have supposed from his manner that Mr. Tilak regarded these party differences as beneath all notice. Perhaps he did so regard them, and, if he did, he was partially right. But still, at the moment, the party difference was the thing attracting most attention in India, and it was sure to grow in importance. Mr. Tilak's own thoughts might have been occupied with the situation all day, but it was only in the afternoon that he came quietly into my empty bungalow alone, and began to discuss it in his concise and definite way. When I published a careful abstract of this conversation shortly afterwards, many Moderates and Extremists alike supposed that he had dissembled his true intentions, and told me only what he wished to be known. As he did not ask for secrecy, certainly I never supposed he was telling me things he did not wish to be known, and I think it very likely that he enjoyed giving himself the pleasure of appearing as Moderate as possible. But in the evening I read over to him the notes I had taken of the conversation just as it was afterwards published, and he approved of what I wrote. In studying his speeches and writings of recent years, I have also found the lines of his policy laid down in almost the same words as he

used to me, and I am inclined to think that his statements resembled his beliefs rather closely.

His first object was to show that, as to their immediate purpose, Extremists and Moderates did not differ in aim :—

"It is not by our purpose, but by our methods only," he said, "that our party has earned the name of Extremist. Certainly, there is a very small party which talks about abolishing the British rule at once and completely. That does not concern us; it is much too far in the future. Unorganized, disarmed, and still disunited, we should not have a chance of shaking the British suzerainty. We may leave all that sort of thing to a distant time. Our object is to obtain eventually a large share in the administration of our own country. Our remote ideal is a confederacy of the Indian provinces, possessing colonial self-government, with all Imperial questions set apart for the central government in England. Perhaps our Home Rule would take the form of Provincial Councils of fifty or sixty members, nominated or indirectly elected at first, but elected by popular vote as education became more general.

"But that ideal also," he went on, "is far ahead of us—perhaps generations ahead. What we aim at doing now is to bring pressure on the bureaucracy; to make it feel that all is not well. Of late the attitude of our British officials has greatly changed for the worse. They no longer speak of educating us up to freedom, as the great Englishmen like Elphinstone did in the past. They appear to agree with the *Times* that our education in subjects like English history must be checked, because it is dangerous for 'natives' to learn anything about freedom. Your present statesmen seem to take the old Roman Empire as their ideal, and

even in that they follow the modern school of Oxford historians, who trace the fall of the Empire to the concession of citizenship to the provinces.

"I know the worst that you can say about the Russian bureaucracy; but even that bureaucracy does, according to its lights, seek to maintain the honour and prosperity of Russia, because Russia is its own country. Our bureaucracy administers a country not its own for the sake of a country far away, entirely different in character and interests. Our bureaucracy is despotic, alien, and absentee."

Mr. Tilak then referred to the well-known complaints brought against our Administration by nearly all students of Indian economics—the "drain" of some £30,000,000 to £35,000,000 a year to England in the shape of various payments from an impoverished country; the ruin of Indian trades and manufactures, first by duties against her exports, and now by customs dues within her own borders, deliberately imposed for the advantage of British, Austrian, and American firms; the reduction of very nearly the whole population to a subsistence on a starving agriculture; and the unexplained increase of malaria, famine, and plague.

"The immediate question for us," he continued, "is how we are to bring pressure on this bureaucracy, in which we have no effective representation, but are debarred from all except subordinate positions. It is only in our answer to that question that we differ from the so-called Moderates. They still hope to influence public opinion in England by

sending deputations, supporting a newspaper, and pleading the justice of our cause. Both parties, of course, have long ago given up all hope of influencing Anglo-Indian opinion out here. But even in England we find most people ignorant and indifferent about India, and the influence of retired Anglo-Indians at home is perpetually against us. When Lord Cromer said the other day that India must be no party question, he meant that Liberals should support the bureaucracy as blindly as Tories. The history of the last year has proved to us how unexceptionably they fulfil that duty.

"Under these disappointments we Extremists have determined on other methods. It is a matter of temperament, and the younger men are with us. Our motto is 'Self-reliance, not Mendicancy.'

"Besides the ordinary Swadeshi movement, we work by boycott and passive resistance. Our boycott is voluntary. We do not advocate picketing or compulsory prevention from the purchase of foreign goods. And in passive resistance we shall simply refuse to notice such measures as the Seditious Meetings Act. But we do not care what happens to ourselves. We are devoted absolutely and without reservation to the cause of the Indian peoples. To imprison even 3000 or 4000 of us at the same time would embarrass the bureaucracy. That is our object—to attract the attention of England to our wrongs by diverting trade and obstructing the Government. Without in the least intending it, England has promoted the idea of Indian unity—by railways, by education, and the use of a common official language. The mere pressure of the British domination upon us makes for unity. Our unity will not be complete, perhaps, for generations yet, but it is the goal to which our faces are now set, and we shall not turn back."

Ideal of Self-government

As I said, many have suspected that, in this statement of his party's aims and methods, Mr. Tilak was playing down to an Englishman's love of moderation. To some extent that may have been true, but only, I think, with regard to the distance in time at which he placed India's realization of self-government. On January 4, 1907, Mr. Tilak had addressed the students in College Square, Calcutta, upon the "Tenets of the New Party," and I extract a few sentences dealing with this subject :—

"There were certain points," he said, "on which both parties were agreed. The object both parties had at heart was the same ; it was self-government. The present system of administration was ruinous to the country both materially and morally. . . . There were some, indeed, who still believed that the continuance of the British rule was necessary for some centuries in order to raise them to the level of civilized nations. Those who held such views obviously could not follow his arguments, and they must agree to differ and part as friends. But most of them were agreed that the present system must be mended or ended as soon as possible. Their object being the same, it was with regard to their methods that the difference arose.

". . . The New Party's conclusion was that it was impossible to gain any concessions by petitions and prayers. This was the first difference between the Moderate and Progressive parties. He did not believe in the philanthropy of British politics. There was no instance in history of one foreign nation ruling another for the benefit of the other and not for its own profit. The rule of one nation by another

was in itself unnatural. He granted the efficiency of the British Government and the excellence of its methods for its own purpose, but these methods and that efficiency did not work for the interests of the people of the country. A good foreign government was less desirable than an inferior native government." *

On the question of revolution and revolutionary violence, the following passage occurred in Mr. Tilak's address during the Shivaji Festival in Poona, June, 1907 :—

"It is true that what we seek may seem like a revolution ; it is a revolution in the sense that it means a complete change in the theory of the government of India as now put forward by the bureaucracy. It is true that this revolution must be a bloodless revolution, but it would be a folly to suppose that if there is to be no shedding of blood, there are also to be no sufferings to be undergone by the people. These sufferings must be great. You can win nothing unless you are prepared to suffer. An appeal to the good-feeling of the rulers is everywhere discovered to have but narrow limits. Your revolution must be bloodless, but that does not mean that you may not have to suffer or to go to gaol.' " †

When I left the mountain's summit, Mr. Tilak accompanied me back to the limit of the dark and ancient walls. I recognized in him the personal attraction that Extremists always have—the freedom from hesitation and half-measures, the delight in conflict, the reckless disregard of self. When to this

* Report in Mr. Tilak's paper, the *Mahratta*, January 13, 1907.

† Report in the *Mahratta*, June 30, 1907.

attraction his own people could add his personal and intimate acquaintance with all classes among them down to the poorest villagers, and his steady maintenance of all that they held most dear in religious belief and customary observances, I could not wonder at his influence among them. So he stood surrounded by the ruins of empires built by his own and other races, while, with the merriment and ironic humour I knew so well, our soldiers of the helio party folded up their instruments among the rocks close by and prepared for night.*

* On June 24, 1908, Mr. Tilak was again arrested for alleged sedition contained in an article of the *Kesari*, commenting on the suppressive measures introduced after the discovery of bombs in Calcutta. He was tried in Bombay before Mr. Justice Davar and a special jury of seven Europeans and two Parsis. The jury was unable to agree, but the judge accepted the verdict of guilty from seven against two, and Mr. Tilak was sentenced to six years' transportation and a fine of 1000 rupees (July 22, 1908).

CHAPTER IV

The Ryot's Burden

Several times in Poona I met a Mr. Junshi (as I will call him), who lived in one of the beautiful houses the Mahrattas used to build while their Peshwas still reigned. He was an oldish man, for an Indian, but thin, bright-eyed and alert, and from his mouth statistics flowed like water from a fountain statue. One day I called on him, and was shown into the open courtyard of old marble and teak, round which the main building rose in three stories ; but beyond I could see another courtyard, more beautiful and cooler still, where lived his wife, his sons' wives, his nieces, and other ladies of the blood, and beyond that again there was a glimpse of leaves and brilliant flowers.

"We require flowers," he said, "for the worship of our idols. We worship our idols here in the house every morning and evening, hanging garlands round their necks and placing bunches of flowers before them. You, I believe, worship only once a week."

I told him I had been brought up on family prayers that never failed in regularity, even when we were at the seaside, and this pleased him very much.

"However," he went on, "I think we have an advantage in acknowledging so many gods in our pantheon that each of us can choose which he likes best. For each of our idols is a symbol of some divine attribute, and helps the worshipper to fix his thoughts upon the attribute he most desires to worship."

"But some of us also," I said, "find it helpful to contemplate images representing the attributes of motherly love, chastity, compassion, or courage in the face of evil; and we offer flowers to them."

This pleased him too, but when we reached his long room upstairs we turned from idols to the main interest of his life. On bookshelves round the walls, and heaped upon the floor and tables, were hundreds of volumes and pamphlets crammed with figures. It seemed as if the owner had collected every book and essay ever written upon the economics of India, and year by year had filtered them into his mind. He had the instinct for averages which I take to be the economist's instinct. He thought of women and children in terms of addition; he saw men as columns walking. He watched the rising and falling curves of revenue, expenditure, and population as others watch the

curves of beauty. Any line of figures was welcome to his spirit, and though he had made his living by teaching little Indians to read "Robinson Crusoe," his chief study seemed to lie in the scripture called the "Statistical Abstract relating to British India." Upon this careful piece of literature he meditated day and night; or, if his mind required a change, he relaxed it on theology.

I have called the "Statistical Abstract" literature, and to him it was so. To him it was as pleasing as a poem to know that under the heading of "Priests and others engaged in religion," the number of "total supported" was 2,728,812, among whom 178,656 females were classified as "actual workers"; or that the total supported by "indefinite and disreputable occupations" was 737,033, and in this class alone the male and female "actual workers" were approximately equal. He liked to meditate on the daily average of prisoners in the various provinces, and on the infirmities of population according to residence and according to age. It was good to know that there were about 6,000,000 more males than females in the country, but 18,000,000 more widows than widowers, and 391,000 widows under fifteen. These were the lyrics or realistic ballads of his reading, but he took higher interest in the figures that move with something of epic grandeur. To him there was a splendour and æsthetic satisfaction in knowing that the total

of India's population, including the Native States, was 294,361,056 in 1901, and that of this number 207,050,557 were Hindus like himself; while agriculture supported 191,691,731—close upon two-thirds, or 65·16 per cent., as he put it—and 15,686,421 (including nearly 1,000,000 females) could write and read, a total of 1,125,231 being "literate in English."

But I think, after all, it was the great passage headed "Finance" that he enjoyed with the most delicate appreciation for style. Perhaps it depended on his mood whether he more admired the lines of the "Gross Revenue and Expenditure" or of the "Net Revenue and Expenditure." It was sonorous as a hexameter to read aloud that the total gross revenue in India and England for 1905–6 was £84,997,685, and the total gross expenditure charged to revenue was £82,905,831. But the net statements of revenue at £48,539,680, and expenditure at £46,447,826, were trim as a sonnet. It was a dubious point, but for details he certainly preferred the gross, thinking them more realistic, and his favourite passage was that beginning, "Principal heads of Revenue, Land Revenue, £18,862,169, for 1905–6." Against this he would set, as a kind of antiphone, the gross expenditure on army services (excluding Marine and Military Works) of £19,267,130.*

* The total military expenditure for India, including Marine,

There were two passages also from which he appeared to derive the kind of savage pleasure most men seek in tragedy or satire. One was that the gross expenditure on education by the Government of India amounted to less than £1,700,000 in 1905–6, and he worked out the State expenditure for education for the current year (1907–8) at 1½*d.* per head in India, as against 5*s.* 4*d.* per head in France. The other was that the Hindus, Mohammedans, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, and Animists contributed out of their labour during the year of grace which we had just survived (1906–7) the sum of £125,906 in order that the British residents might not be devoid of the consolations of religion as represented by Bishops and Anglican chaplains, Roman priests, Presbyterian divines, and cemeteries.

For myself, there was, of course, a certain ironic interest in the endowment of an Anglo-Indian's Christianity by the natives around him, and for the first time I was inclined to favour a system of payment by results. But, in regard to Finance, all such things are insignificant in comparison with the one main question of the tax upon the cultivator.*

Military Works, etc., was £21,586,086 for 1906–7, but this was reduced in the following year to £20,520,500. See "Government of India, Financial Statement, 1908–9," p. 16.

* Of the many books on the Indian Land Revenue, one may consult Mr. Romesh Dutt's "India in the Victorian Age," "Famines and Land Assessment," and "The Economic History of British India";

The Settlement

An immemorial custom in India, consolidated in the Laws of Manu, gave the ruler a share in all crops—a fraction fluctuating according to the soil, but not higher than one quarter. Probably this was a tribute levied upon the village community in return for protection, or simply as a penalty for conquest. It was paid in kind, so much grain from so much crop, and as the proportion was always the same on the same ground, the peasant did not feel the variation in quantity much. But having inherited the custom, the British rulers found it more convenient and uniform to collect the tax in cash, and to levy the rate, not in proportion to each year's crop, but on a valuation that remains unaltered for long terms of years—usually thirty years in Madras and Bombay, but twenty years in other places, for instance in the Punjab. This process of valuation is called the Settlement, and Settlement Officers are almost continually engaged in drawing up a kind of progressive Doomsday Book upon the fields, pastures, woods, and

"Land Revenue Policy," an official reply to Mr. Dutt's criticisms, issued by Lord Curzon in 1902; some chapters in Sir Henry Cotton's "New India"; some pamphlets by Sir William Wedderburn, "The Indian Ryot," "The Skeleton at the Jubilee Feast," etc.; "Indian Problems," by Mr. S. M. Mitra (strongly on the official side); and Mr. Sidney Low's "Vision of India," containing in chapter xxiii. an interesting account of the Settlement Officer's work in camp. Mr. Theodore Morison's "Industrial Organization of an Indian Province" (1906), is also mainly occupied with the land question in the United Provinces of Agra and Oude.

wells of each village. It is hardly possible to ascertain the exact proportion of value fixed by the Settlement Officers as the tax. Throughout India there is a general understanding that "about one-half of the well-ascertained net assets should be the Government demand."* This income tax of ten shillings in the pound is, however, in reality a fairly steady minimum, and the tax often goes higher, to say nothing of the "cesses" or local taxes nominally levied for roads and education.

Whether the money is called tax or rent, would not seem at first sight to make much difference; for it has to be paid and the people who pay it have no voice in its levy or in its expenditure. If it is a tax, it is a large income tax on land, fixed for some years and collected from the smallest landowners as well as the largest. If it is a rent, the system is partial land-nationalization without national control and without economic freedom. But as a matter of practice, the difference in the use of words is vital, and it cannot be put more plainly than in the Minute written by Lord Salisbury when he was Secretary of State for India in 1875:—

"If we say that it is rent, the modern Indian statesman will hold the Government in strictness entitled to all that remains after wages and profits have been paid, and he will do what he can to hasten the advent of the day when the State shall no longer be kept by any weak compromises

* "Land Revenue Policy" (1902), p. 13.

from the enjoyment of its undoubted rights. If we persuade him that it is revenue, he will note the vast disproportion of its incidence compared to that of other taxes, and his efforts will tend to remedy the inequality, and to lay upon other classes and interests a more equitable share of the fiscal burden. I prefer the latter tendency to the former." *

The average Indian official does not agree with Lord Salisbury. He prefers the rent theory to the tax theory, and when the cultivator has been allowed his subsistence off the holding, together with what the official estimates as profit, the rent is taken in the name of revenue, but under the excuse of rent, and I have often heard officials urge the theory of land nationalization in their defence. It is, however, as I said, a nationalization in which the conditions of political and economic freedom are absent.

The new assessment, which in Bombay lasts for thirty years, depends almost entirely on the discretion of the Settlement Officer. His decision is supervised by higher authorities, but it usually stands, and the only fixed rule for his guidance is that he may not increase the revenue of a Taluka (group of villages) by more than 33 per cent., nor that of a single village by more than 66 per cent., nor that of a single holding by more than 100 per cent. This leaves him plenty of margin, and in fifteen large districts of the Bombay Presidency

* Quoted by Mr. Vaughan Nash in his chapter on the Land Revenue System : "The Great Famine and its Causes" (1900).

we find that the average increase was 30·4 per cent. at the last assessment (1899).* This increase is assessed, not on the yield of the ground, but on the "capabilities" of the ground, and "capabilities" are calculated upon the quality of the soil, the average rainfall, the market, the railway, and other elements of "unearned increment." Mr. Vaughan Nash's account of the matter expresses what happens :—

"The officer appointed to value the land and fix the assessment has made his shot—I use the expression advisedly—at the average crop, and has determined the demand which is to hold for the next twenty or thirty years; and in theory it is understood that the cultivator is to enjoy not less than half the profits of his farm, beside the privilege of subsisting on its produce. . . . At the end of the assessment period the authorities make another shot; and now mark what happens. They find that since their last valuation prices have advanced, new railways have been made, cultivation has been intensified—or might be intensified, under a little pressure; and, after the due application of tests of all kinds, geological, botanical, hydrographical, meteorological, arboricultural, etc., it is discovered that land and farmer can bear an extra 30 per cent. or so on the old assessment." †

We may assume the Settlement Officer to be a scrupulously honest and painstaking public servant. Let us assume that his knowledge of agriculture

* "India in the Victorian Age," by R. C. Dutt, p. 491 (2nd edition).

† "The Great Famine," pp. 240–2.

and local conditions is equal to his devotion. Still his responsibility is almost too great for the wisest and most zealous official. It is his official duty to raise as much as he decently can for the Government, whether he calls the sum tax or rent or share of profits. Against his decision there can be no resistance and no practicable appeal. The cultivator is not in reality a free agent in the new bargain, and if he protests that the payment is beyond his income, he is informed that, being incapable of cultivating his own land to the highest advantage, he must learn better or go.

Usually he does neither. In most cases he has no opportunity for learning better, and he cannot, or does not, go. He borrows. An anonymous writer once attacked me with scorn for saying that a large proportion of cultivators in Bombay were receiving no net income, no profits for themselves at all ; they were simply existing on their land, and for their few clothes, medicines, and family festivals they were trying to get outside work, selling their family bangles, or appealing to the money-lender on the off-chance that a "bumper crop" might enable them to pay something some day.

"According to Mr. Nevinson," cried this anonymous writer, "the ryots in the Presidency are such simpletons as to go on cultivating land, their income from such cultivation being always equalled by their cultivation expenses. Why, then, do they cultivate at all, when obviously by abandoning

the land and its profitless cultivation they could at once better their position by devoting to other work the time and labour they now expend on cultivation." *

The question is worthy of the old professorial economists, who never went beyond books for knowledge, and settled the affairs of human nature in their studies by their own conceptions of reason. They used to tell us that, when one trade failed, the labour devoted to it became absorbed in other occupations. I have often wondered, if their trade of theorizing failed, in what other occupation their labour would become absorbed. A large number of our Indian officials spend nearly the whole of their time dealing with abstractions and cases on paper, their feet under their writing-tables. The increasing pressure of the daily routine drives them further and further from reality, and one might suppose that this anonymous writer had never been face to face with a peasant in his home, or known anything of the peasant's clinging to the land, or ever been thrown out of work and compelled to face starvation for a single day himself.

What I said was perfectly accurate. The Indian cultivator will cling to his land even when he makes no profit beyond his subsistence wage. I believe the same to be true of peasant proprietors or small holders in nearly every country; certainly it is true

* Letter from "A Poona Resident" to the *Glasgow Herald*, December 14, 1907.

in France, Russia, and Ireland, for I have known cases in all three countries. So the Indian cultivator, when he makes no profit and is called upon for increased assessment or his daughter's marriage, does not at once set off to Bombay and become a watchmaker or a docker, as economists think he ought. As I said, he borrows. Usually he goes to the village money-lender (banya or sowkar), and receives advances at 12 to 30 per cent. per annum, according to his character in the village. In reality, I think, the money-lender speculates on the chance of a "bumper crop" every few years, but in the last resort he may sell up the cultivator through the civil courts in Bombay, or convert him into his own labourer to work the land for him on a subsistence wage. In hopes of saving the ryot from this extortion, the Government has devised agricultural banks and other schemes for advancing loans at the reasonable interest of 5 per cent., and in course of time this benefit will probably increase. But at present the economists, as usual, have made the mistake of omitting the uncertain element in man, and he yet continues to prefer his familiar old money-lender to the most advantageous Government loan. In some districts I have heard there is a national feeling about it, but I suppose the chief reason really is that the Government claims its interest down on the nail for a fixed day, whereas the village money-lender can often be cajoled,

bribed, frightened, or persuaded, like a reasonable tailor, to put off the dreaded moment of demand.

The actual cash amount of the assessment is not such an important question to the cultivator as its proportion to his income. The figures given for Deccan villages by Mr. Vaughan Nash in his "Family Budgets," show an assessment of about two shillings an acre.* Many of the villages I visited were probably poorer, being in the mountains, but the average assessment tax in them appeared to be only a little over one shilling an acre, and sometimes as low as fivepence, on an average holding of twenty acres. The assessment, as I said, has now to be paid in cash on a certain day, often while the crop is still growing. If payment is not made, everything the peasant possesses can be seized and sold by the Revenue authorities—house and land, plough and oxen, bedding and cooking pot. That is the money-lender's opportunity, and in practice it is usually the money-lender who hands over the cash. If he refuses a further advance, the Government is compelled either to cancel the debt (which is now often done in famine seasons), or to suspend the debt till next harvest (which is frequently done, but only puts off the evil day), or to sell the peasant up, which usually yields a very small price, and sometimes produces serious disturbances, as in the

* "The Great Famine," p. 62 ff.

Deccan riots of 1875, when the money-lenders were burnt out and driven from the village.*

As is well known, nearly all the land in the Bombay Presidency, and far the greater part of Madras, is held on this "ryotwari" system, or peasant tenantry to the State, there being no intermediary at law between the Government and the cultivator, though the money-lender often acts as such. In many other provinces the land is owned by landlords, or "zemindars," much as in our own country, and the revenue is taken from them, though it is ultimately paid by the cultivator. In Bengal the zemindars were granted a Permanent Settlement in 1793, which fixed the demands of the State so that no further assessment has been instituted, and revenue stands at an almost constant figure. The Rent Acts of 1859 and 1885 aimed at protecting the cultivators from the usual abuses and extortions of the landlord system, but whether the Permanent Settlement, which, of course, involves a great loss of revenue to Government, is justified or not by its results—whether the greater prosperity and intelligence of Bengal arise from the moderation and fixity of the assessment, or are due to climate, race, and enterprise, is one of those questions that are argued between officials and educated Indians with a kind of perpetual motion. A similar

* See "The Skeleton at the Jubilee Feast," by Sir William Wedderburn (1897), p. 9.

Permanent Settlement for the whole of India was proposed by Lord Canning just before his death in 1862, but finally abandoned twenty years later, after laborious discussion.*

On leaving even small and beautiful cities like Poona you pass through a zone where the inhabitants enjoy the health and suffer from the scrappiness of suburbs. Here they live partly by gardening, partly by burning lime or working in the town, and their houses have a touch of urban refinement. The ceilings and the tops of the walls, for instance, are hung with those garish pictures of religious subjects—the adventures of Krishna, and other scenes—which would provide so suitable a market for German art. But the suburbs are short, within a few miles you enter the heart of the country, and in his primeval village are brought

* The whole question of land-ownership and the Settlement is very lucidly discussed in Mr. Theodore Morison's "Industrial Organization of an Indian Province," chapter ii. His general conclusion is that the Indian system of land-tenure is something intermediate between complete nationalization and absolute private property. "To the extent of one-half the State is able to appropriate that unearned increment in rental incomes which is due to the development of the country. But, except for this contribution to the public exchequer, the economic position of the landlord is not affected by the land revenue laws. He receives rent for the use of the national and indestructible properties of the soil, and he raises that rent when the growth of population and the development of the country makes it profitable to bring poorer lands under cultivation." In saying this, Mr. Morison is, however, obviously thinking only of a zemindar or landlord district, such as the United Province, with which his book chiefly deals.

THE RYOT'S HOME.

CARRYING LEAVES FOR FUEL.

[*Face p.* 92

face to face with the ryot—the cultivator of the soil, the basis of the Indian Empire, the one man for whom, or at least by means of whom, all the rest of the intricate machinery exists, from the splendours of Simla down to the office of the "Remembrancer of Legal Affairs," and the "Fingerprint Bureau," in Poona's residential quarter, or to Lord Kitchener's reviews in the Poona cantonment.

In my various journeys within a circle of twenty miles round the city, I found the ryot much what I had expected—gentle-mannered, patient, hardy, and incredibly thin, living with his family in a clean but dusty hut, furnished with little beyond a few brass pots and dishes. All day he was working in his field, and he gathered for converse at evening——"cow-dust time," as they call it—on the steps of the village temple, in which a vague red image represents the idea of helpful strength—something like Hercules or the Archangel Michael; for it is the same Maruta who helped Rama on his wandering search for the beloved Sita.

I have never heard even the most frigid official speak evil of the ryot. As the best patronizers in the world, we find in the ryot a most suitable object for our characteristic capacity. Hard-working, sober, and reverential beyond the dreams of country parsons, he is exactly the sort of being to whom we enjoy extending the kindly and protective sympathy due from a squire to his villagers. Just as in Natal

or Nigeria every one is ready to commend the untutored savage and pat his curly head provided he remains savage, so in India even the Anglo-Indian will admit a distant affection for the poor dear ryot, and regrets the good old times when hardly an Indian of them all made pretence to further education or equality. But education and equality are the two things that undermine our accustomed pedestal, and the thought of a time when we might no longer be required to exercise our national function of patronage fills us with dismay.

The crop and the assessment are the two kindred and vital points in the ryot's earthly life, as distinguished from the life of his spirit. In the Deccan, as in all parts of India, the crop is simply a matter of opportune rainfall, and when I was in Poona there had been no good crop for fifteen years. That autumn the prospect was a little worse than ordinarily poor, though the main famine district of the year was in the United Provinces, far away north. Preparations for a serious famine had to be made already, for, as Sir William Hunter estimated, one-fifth of India's population—say sixty million souls—are perpetually living on insufficient food, apart from famines ; and, partly owing to the export-trade, the villagers no longer store grain to meet an evil day, nor do they possess cash to purchase grain from other parts of the country. So when the pinch of scarcity comes, the land-owning or land-taxing

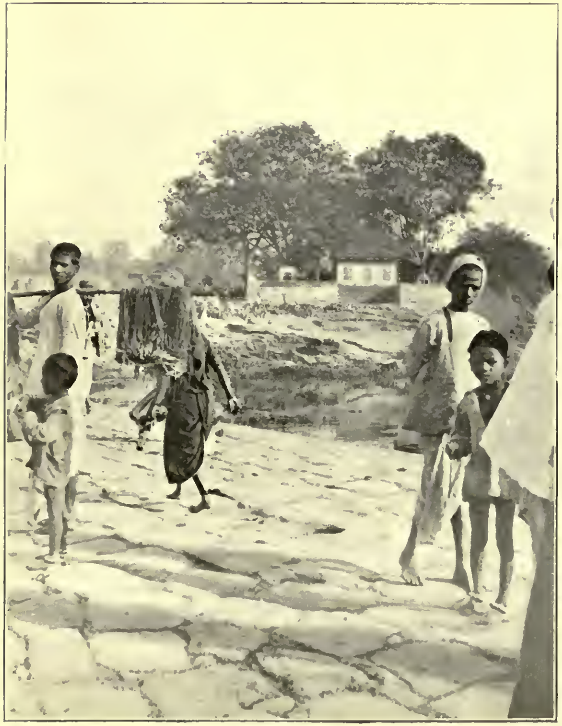
Government alone stands between them and starvation ; and, indeed, the Government prides itself at all times upon its service as protector of the poor, especially against other landlords and money-lenders. There is always a good deal of justice in the claim, even when the Government, having first tempered the wind, proceeds to shear the lamb. But famine is the special opportunity for Government beneficence. All officials then vie with each other in the thankless labour of holding the bodies and souls of thousands together, and within a month of his landing as Governor of Bombay, Sir George Clarke had all his preparations ready for relief works, terracing of hills, sinking of wells, and remission (not merely suspension) of the year's assessment money.

Of the assessment and of famine I had heard and read a great deal before, but one set of grievances, closely connected with both, was new to me. It arose from the Forest Laws—a subject we hardly consider in England unless we are thinking of William Rufus or the game-preserves of kilted City Fathers in the Highlands. The present strict system of forest preservation was, I believe, instituted after the terrible famine of 1877–78, with the admirable intention of restoring the rainfall. In old times the village communities maintained a tract of communal forest for grazing and fuel near each village, just as they did formerly in England, and still do in Russia. An ancient Indian custom set aside an acre of grazing

for every acre of cultivated land. But under our rule the influence of village communities was to a great extent destroyed, because we remembered nothing like it in England, and the plough was suffered to encroach upon the forest till there was a real danger that no forest would be left and the rains would cease. Nothing could be better than the intention of the Forest Department in checking the process called "denudation," but instead of restoring the control of forests to the villagers themselves under definite rules of maintenance, they centralized the managements as bureaucrats will, declared uncultivated land to be Government forest, prohibited wood-gathering or cattle-grazing without payment, let out the grass and timber by auction to contractors, and entered the proceeds to the advantage of the Department. There is no denying the benefits to Government and the contractors. The destruction of forest is checked, hay and fuel are supplied to the cavalry cantonments and cities, and the Department (including Burma) contributes a net sum of about £800,000 a year to the Indian exchequer.* Could anything be more desirable?

"But how about my buffalo?" cries the thin ryot of the valley. As Mr. Vaughan Nash said in

* The net profit on Forest Revenue for 1905–6 was £824,748. In the four previous years it had risen by nearly £100,000 a year, but in 1907–8 it dropped to £756,100, chiefly owing to a fall of price in Burma.



On the Causeway.

A Village Headman.

[*Face p.* 96.

his book on the Famine, the buffalo is quite as necessary to the Indian peasant as a boat to a fisherman. Buffaloes are necessary for work on the fields, manure for the soil, and milk for the family, to say nothing of fuel and flooring. No one who, like myself, has lived much in Kaffir huts with cow-dung floors, or has cooked on the veldt for weeks together with cow-dung as fuel, will make light of such uses. But still, when wood is to be had, only a fool uses cow-dung for cooking or even for flooring. In the Indian forests, wood is to be had, but the Forest Laws forbid the people to use it, and they are driven to floor and cook with the cow-dung that ought rightly to go as manure for the fields.

But the grazing is the chief difficulty, now that the old communal lands are being swallowed up by the Forest Department. The villagers may earn a few pence by cutting grass for the contractor who carts it away to the city, but the hungry buffaloes look up and are not fed. Even where a grazing allotment is made, it is too small, and I was in a village fifteen miles from Poona where the twelve families could afford to keep only one buffalo between them, and they had to pay rent to the Forest Department for the right of grazing that one buffalo and a few goats upon little patches of the vast hillsides, all of which they regarded as the common lands of the village for centuries past. The rent, no doubt, was very small, probably only

a few shillings a year for the buffalo and goats, but the village income was very small too.

From the bureaucracy's well-intentioned schemes, other peculiar results arise which perhaps did not occur to those who framed the laws. One case, for instance, was mentioned to me by several villagers as a kind of typical or proverbial absurdity. A waggon broke its wheel and the owner began to mend it. The village police, hearing the hammer, arrested him under Section E, paragraph 109 (or some such clause) of the Forest Laws, upon the charge of practising carpentry within a mile of the forest limit. In his innocence, he asked what he ought to have done to get his waggon home over the few hundred yards to his door. He was informed that he ought to have walked into Poona, twenty or thirty miles away, discovered the office of the Forest Department, waited till the proper official, who would very likely be in the country, returned to town, stated his case, and asked for a legal certificate authorizing him to cut timber for the repairs of his wheel on the spot. Then, with good luck, within a week or ten days from the accident, he might have found himself in a position to drive his waggon home in accordance with bureaucratic regulations. I believe, however, that this rule has now been modified, and that the man would only have to hunt a forest ranger for permission. But take another grievance, which recalls childhood's

memories of the Norman Conquest. The ryot's little wealth of crop and stock is continually exposed to wild beasts—deer, wolves, panthers, and boars—just as our farmers' crops are exposed to hares and rabbits. But under the Arms Act, the ryot has little chance of killing them himself. His duty is to walk into the nearest town and report the presence of a wild beast to the police. The police look round for an Englishman who wants something to kill. Frequently they advertise for one in the local papers, and usually they have not to wait very long. Off goes the Englishman—rifle, tiffin-basket, boy, bedding, and all. But in the meantime it is not improbable that the wild beast has walked away, or founded a whole new family even worse than himself. At the best, it is just possible that the Englishman may miss him.

While I was in India a movement was started for the protection of the helpless ryot from deer. In many parts of the country, especially in Rajputana and the Central Provinces, you may frequently see herds of deer and antelopes browsing upon the standing crops, to the great loss of the cultivator. It was alleged that the increase of deer was due to the gradual reduction of tigers (which are nature's own corrective), and the proposal was to discourage the slaughter of tigers by withdrawing the Government reward of £3 *6s.* 8*d.* a head, or even to forbid the sport of shooting tigers unless they were proved

by experience to be man-eaters. Personally, I think the latter regulation would be good, for the deer would be reduced, the crops protected, and the tigers increased. But I am not sure how far a ryot, in the interests of agriculture, would approve of a regulation that allowed one tiger one man.

The main grievances of the ryot against the Forest Department may be seen briefly stated in a memorial presented to the Governor of Madras by the cultivators of eight villages in the Salem district, April, 1908. The Forest Department proposed to reserve the Anurath Hills in the neighbourhood of the villages, and the memorial protested that already there was not much waste land for grazing, and hardly enough land even for cultivation. To reserve the hills would also deprive the villagers of wood and fuel, and inflict a kind of double assessment:—

> "You settle our lands," said the memorial, "every thirty years and raise the assessment. To pay this assessment we ought to cultivate our land with the aid of good manure. To have manure we must maintain sufficient stock of cattle. When we enter the forest to procure fodder, you demand permit fees; thus you demand double payment (one in the shape of land assessment and the other in the shape of forest fees) for the lands we cultivate."

The memorial went on to say that, owing to the rigour of forest administration, the villagers, to protect themselves, had to bribe the subordinate

officials of the Forest Department, and it concluded with the words :—

> "We lead a peaceful life. It is the policy of the Government to keep every ryot in a contented and happy state. But in order to secure additional forest revenue, if you permit the Forest officials to enclose an additional reserve against our wishes, you will create much heart-burning and discontent against the Government."

But let us put things at their best. Let us suppose there is neither drought, nor famine, nor plague. Let us assume that the assessment has been paid without borrowing, and the Forest Laws observed or evaded, that wild beasts have been killed, and yet the deer have not damaged the crops. Let us suppose that the ryot's income reaches the highest possible average, which Lord Curzon calculated at £2 a year per head of the population, including all the rich merchants, bankers, and landowners. It is next to impossible that the average income in any village could be as much as that, but let us assume it is. Still it remains at only half what is spent per head in England every year on drink alone. It represents a standard of poverty which we can hardly conceive — a level where every fraction of a farthing counts. And yet I found within twenty miles of Poona a group of villages where the ryots clubbed together of their own accord to hire a schoolmaster at a salary of

eight shillings a month. In face of a sacrifice so astonishing it appeared to me that all the outcries about the dangers of education in India that were then filling the speeches of our statesmen and the columns of the *Times* and Anglo-Indian papers, might with good hope be accounted vain.

A TEMPLE TANK, MADRAS.

[*Face p.* 102.

CHAPTER V

The Southern City

Madras, the most Oriental of the great Indian cities, is well known to English people as the first foothold of Elizabethan merchants, the fortress of Clive, and the coral strand where little English boys used to convert their patient bearers. But apart from these associations, the mother city of Southern India has a peculiar character of her own. Her reformers talk with confidence of the dry light of reason in Madras. They pride themselves on the logic and unimpassioned judgment of her mind. They point to the neighbouring State of Mysore to show what Southern Indians like themselves can do in the way of political advancement, and to Travancore as the most highly educated part of India—the State where women have most freedom, both to gather knowledge and to enjoy their home or leave it. The whole of South India, but especially the city of Madras itself, they regard as a reserve of intellectual force, always ready to support the new spirit that has appeared in

the north and west, and destined ultimately to take the lead in the general movement of reform.

Certainly I noticed signs of a practical intelligence that might be called dry. Hour after hour, on a steaming afternoon, I listened to the Madras members of the municipal corporation arguing in protest against the English members and officials about the position of standpipes, and the adulteration of ghee with oil, and of rice with sand, while the President, in the broadest Scots, kept calling on them to address the chair, or declaring their motion lost. When I was in Madras also, the Decentralization Commission, under Mr. Charles Hobhouse, at that time Under-Secretary for India, began its session, and the educated citizens followed the chaotic windings of its questions and evidence with minute accuracy, all the more eager, perhaps, because Mr. Romesh Dutt, the national authority on Indian economics, was among the Commissioners. It was even more significant that Madras, the devoted home of Hinduism and of Vishnu's worshippers, should have steadily chosen her leading Mohammedan citizen as her representative upon the Viceroy's Council. One may call this a sign of practical intelligence and the dry light of reason, because they could not have chosen a better member than Nawab Syed Mohammed, descendant of our old enemy Tippoo Sultan, and their deep sense of religion did not deter them from the choice. Calm,

modest, and generally silent but for a few definite words thrown into a discussion, he seemed an ideal member for any Council.

Yet, though the boast of reason's dry light is justified, the pervading tone of Madras, and probably of all Southern India, is not practical logic, but imaginative religion. One sometimes finds the two things in attractive combination. I had gone out one early morning to visit the god in his beautiful temple at Mailapur, not very far from the wide-spread "compounds" of park and garden, where the happy English and a few rich Indians reside, two or three miles inland from the sea and the jumbled "Black Town" of crowded natives. There, as I stood by the edge of the temple tank covered with the lotus, I came upon an elderly Hindu reading at the door of his modest home. The verandah was partly arranged as a stable for the sacred cow, partly laid with mats for beggars, wanderers, or religious teachers who might be seeking a shelter for the night. The man had bathed in the tank and washed his only garment of a long cotton cloth, as he did every morning himself, following the cleanly and chivalrous Indian custom. He was a schoolmaster, with a fixed salary of £3 6*s.* 8*d.* a month. Upon this he mainly supported his sons and their wives and children, all of whom lived in his house, under the direction of his widowed mother, who arranged which of the married couples should occupy the

married quarters in turn, as there was not room to supply married quarters for all. In gratitude for her services, and in reverence for motherhood, "which is the centre of human life," he told me how every morning members of the family washed the widow's feet and covered them with flowers, as though they were the feet of a divinity.

The day being a religious holiday—a festival of Shiva, destroyer and healer—he was spending the quiet hours in meditating upon God, and reading a large volume of Professor William James's "Principles of Psychology." In religion he was inclined to the Monist view that the spirit of man is identical in essence with the spirit of God, but admitted that he felt no violent enmity towards the Dualists, who maintain a difference in essence. He wore on his forehead the three strong lines of white and vermillion, which represent the footprint of Vishnu, the maintainer of existence, and pronounce the wearer to be a reverential servant to the god's commands. But, here again, he felt no enmity towards the worshippers of Shiva, who draw three parallel lines in grey or yellow earth across their brows. His true interest lay in the region of philosophy, and as a Monist his conception of the universe hardly differed from Spinozism, unless it be said that he went beyond Spinoza in his belief in a universal Consciousness, the subtle waves of which he could himself universally perceive if only his

A Servant of Vishnu. [*Face p.* 106.

mind were not too gross an instrument of perception. All through his life he had striven to purify and etherialize that instrument by clean feeding and the practice of concentration. He had never touched flesh or strong drink or tobacco. By practising for an increasing time every day, he had been able to fix his mind on eternal truths with such absorption that the transitory things no longer disturbed his meditation, and he had acquired new and subtle powers, enabling him dimly to perceive a consciousness in the air and so-called inanimate objects. He could sometimes even feel the impalpable workings of Karma—the influence of man's reputed good or evil deeds working upon his own destiny, and affecting even the infinitesimal atoms of the universe.

He now longed to retire from the world, to lay aside his sacred thread—the triple thread of Brahmans—and devote to contemplation the few years left. But the size of his patriarchal household, and the necessity of making that 16*s.* 8*d.* a week restrained him, and, of course, his motives were laudable. Nevertheless, as usually happens, it would have been better for himself and his family if he had flung away his obvious duties and followed the call of his higher thoughts alone. For as I came away after receiving sour milk, and the usual pan leaf enclosing a bit of spice and beetelnut to chew, one of his sons—an inferior telegraph

clerk—stole after me to ask my advice about £2, which he had forwarded to a swindling Trust Company that plays the confidence trick with Congo Bonds and other ludicrous impostures. It was pitiful to think that the £2, now probably greasing the dirty works of Belgian brothels and gambling-hells, might have secured the philosopher nearly three weeks' leisure from his school-teaching for the contemplation of the Monistic Essence, and but for his sense of family duty his son could not have squandered it.

But among the common multitudes of the city, the dry light of this philosophic spirit is not conspicuous. It has never arisen, and the religious fervour of their existence remains misty, dark, and warm. Relics of far older beliefs mingle with their Hinduism. In one of their burning-grounds I met a little procession carrying milk in brazen bowls to wash the bones of the dead burnt yesterday, and to pour an offering for the spirit's consolation. Round another grave a group of mourners were seated, offering yellow flowers, and pouring water on the dust that was alive last week. Two of them beat cymbals, and at long intervals a man raised a large white conch-shell to his lips and blew a melancholy note. Why will not the dead listen when they are called? Why will they not give one word of answer to trumpet, prayers, and love? And all the while, one of the mourners, regardless of the

The End of Man.

Offerings to the Dead.

[*Face p.* 108.

world, swayed to and fro chanting the undying truth that man must die, for life is a shadow, and he vanishes ; those who stand beside a grave know this truth undying ; they know that they too shall vanish like a shade, yet they go back to the city and sin, and sin again, forgetting that they too shall vanish like a shade. So the lamentation went on, the water was poured, the milk was offered, the conch-shell sounded its last vain summons, and the living returned to their life of numbered days. In the middle of Africa I have witnessed a yearning ceremonial exactly the same. It was the same that brought Electra out to Agamemnon's tomb. It is the same that one may still see on All Saints' Day, in any primitive region of Europe, and in the cemeteries of Paris herself. For it springs from the common longing of all mankind not to be forgotten, and, if only it were possible, never to forget. The same truth has been beautifully expressed with regard to the Bulgarian villagers of Macedonia by Mr. Brailsford in his book upon that country :—

"The real religion of the Balkans is older and more elemental than Christianity itself; more permanent even than the Byzantine rite. It bridges the intervening centuries and links in pious succession the modern peasant to his heathen ancestor, who wore the same costumes and led the same life in the same fields. It is based on a primitive sorrow before the amazing fact of death, which no mystery of the Resurrection has ever softened. It is neither a rite

nor a creed, but only that yearning love of the living for the dead which is deeper than any creed." *

In the service of the living, the fervent religious spirit of the South takes other forms, some of adoration, some only ritualistic. Now and then it turns to practical utility—the hope that religion will bring some temporal good to the worshipper. There is a belief almost universal, I suppose, in our own country and in Europe that religious thoughts, prayers, and observances ensure outward well-being, health, protection, or prosperity of some kind. In the East it is probably not so common, for religion is there elevated to its proper sphere of the inmost soul, where the comforts and external advantages of life disappear into insignificance compared with the glory that is revealed. But, deeply religious as the Hindu mind can be, I found the people in the streets of Madras directing religious ecstasy to the rather trivial object of healing disease, much as though they had been mere Faith-healers or Christian Scientists. The festival of Shiva lasted three or four days, and at any hour of the burning sunlight, one could meet little processions parading through Black Town with some sort of shrine or image, accompanied by pipes and drums, dancing and praying crowds. The sick were caught up from the doors into the pious orgies and with holy revelry danced themselves into a state

* "Macedonia," by H. N. Brailsford, p. 75.

of ecstatic self-forgetfulness which was unquestionably wholesome. Few diseases, I think, could stand against such treatment, provided only that the patient survived. It might be tried with miraculous results in the streets of our bath-chair watering-places. But if the triumph and proof of religion depended on mere miracles of healing the sick and raising the dead, it would be a pity to waste a minute's thought upon the subject.

Far more fruitful was the unmixed and disinterested adoration that thronged the temples in the evening. One night I found myself at a beautiful temple in the southern part of the town. It is a Vishnu temple: here is his tank, here his chariot. But the people there were celebrating the festival of Shiva all the same, and among the deep orange columns of the external portico, dim figures in white or Indian red moved silently about, hardly revealed in the purple night by rare lanterns and tiny lamps. Being accompanied by a Brahman who was guardïan of the temple, I was admitted through brazen doors into a vast courtyard leading up to the inner shrine on which no alien may look. Here the worshippers stood in an almost continuous crowd, silent, slowly moving in dubious obscurity. I caught one gleam of yellow light on prostrate forms among columns beyond, but a priest led me quietly into a vast chamber at the side, where were stabled the mystic figures of a dragon large as life, a flying kite and an

elephant, all awaiting the great day when the god takes to his car and moves in glory through the streets, seated beneath the mystic tree, which also was standing there. From a hidden and cavernous safe the priest then displayed a flashing wealth of emeralds and rubies, unnumbered as the Milky Way and, possibly, surpassing their own value by their holiness. Disappearing for a while, after shutting the safe, he returned with a pink garland, thick as a liner's hawser, and hung it round my neck, where already two white garlands hung, for I had been received with honour by a political club just before I came. But this new pink garland nearly touched my feet. It had been an offering to the shrine, and came to me cold from the neck of the god himself.

Thus sanctified and adorned, I passed back into the throng of worshippers in the temple court, and presently felt among them a peculiar stir of excitement, which I naturally attributed to my unusual appearance, just visible in the darkness. But when I was conducted by the Brahman to a large private house overlooking the precincts, for the first time in India I failed to receive the usual Hindu welcome. The rooms and courtyards glimmered with little lamps. Seated in the verandah before the door, a band of pipers, blowing as they pleased, drove dull care away—far away, one hoped, for her sake. Gods, kites, and elephants of painted alabaster were

arranged in neat rows upon the table of an inner room, and little girls, dressed in the gorgeous silks and embroideries of Southern India, tended them with lights and flowers. But the master of the house, himself a temple guardian, politely expressed an unwillingness to receive the foreigner, and when I turned back among the excited crowd that swarmed round me under the temple colonnade, I heard for the first time the wild shout of "Bande Mataram! Bande Mataram!" (Hail to the Motherland!) rising on every side. If a Brahman had not been my guide, I should have supposed the outcry to be due to religious indignation. He told me afterwards it was in compliment to my Liberal opinions. But I think it was not in compliment to my English clothes, which were far more conspicuous than my Liberal opinions.

There is no part of India where the anti-English feeling was less to be expected than in Madras. Here the Hindu is seen at his mildest, here he asks least of this fleeting world, and accepts destiny with the gentlest quietude. If ever there was a country easy to govern, it should be Southern India; and in time past no part of India has surrendered itself more unreservedly to British rule or trusted more confidently to British justice. Much of this friendliness has been due to the influence of our missionaries, represented by some very remarkable men in Madras. I do not know their statistics of conversion:

I think they must be very low, especially as the Bishop of Madras, during my visit, was expressing his despair of ever converting educated Indians, and was urging his clergy to pay attention only to the lowest castes. But the missionary influence upon education itself has been very large. It has created one famous and excellent institution, and a popular restaurant besides. It is chiefly the cause, I suppose, of the widespread knowledge of English among all classes in the city. More than this, I found that in Madras and other parts of India, as I had seen in Nigeria, Central Africa, and South Africa—even in Macedonia and Armenia also—the missionaries do maintain a certain standard of justice to the credit of the "White Man," or "European," and that the oppressed and destitute, even among the classes below the protection of any caste, do actually turn to them with the assurance of finding a quality of mercy and sympathetic understanding not very remote from their profession of brotherhood in Christ. It is easy to join in the taunt about "Famine Christians," and to point to the curve of conversions varying directly with the price of food. But if we were starving, I suppose most of us would gladly profess any religion in the world for a prospect of regular meals, and the important thing is that by the missionaries no class is neglected or left to feel itself outcast from humanity—not even the poor fishers on the sands south of the town, or the

dwellers in savage huts that let at fourpence a month, and are sublet among different families.

Missionaries have done much, and so has a succession of good governors, from the time of Sir Thomas Munro, to whose memory the temple bell still rings a special chime before service. Our own people have forgotten him for three generations now, but I have seen the Hindu women drop their baskets and bow their heads as they passed his equestrian statue on "the Island"—an honour seldom paid to equestrian statues at home. He it was who reduced the taxes and watered the land and executed justice ; and so his memory lives. Taught by his example, the people used to recognize that there were some things we English could do : we could organize drainage, and build bridges to stand, and decide quarrels without taking bribes. So they were content to leave these comparatively unimportant concerns in our hands, while they devoted themselves to the only two occupations that matter much—the growth of food and the worship of God. If their faith in our peculiar powers is declining, and they are themselves making new claims upon government and public life, the change is due to underlying causes, which are affecting the whole of India in varying degrees, and have already produced a new sense of unity in opposition.

Unhappily, the grievance of Anglo-Indian manners is not peculiar to Madras. The attitude

of the vulgar among Anglo-Indians towards the people of the country would be incredible to any one who had not seen it, and the vulgar are a large and increasing class. They increase by a kind of infection, and the deterioration of a new-comer who has been sent out with the usual instincts of our educated classes in favour of politeness and decency, is often as unconscious as it is rapid. The pressure of his social surroundings is almost irresistible. If he does not wish to cut himself off altogether from the society and amusements of his own people, he will be driven to conform to the code of insolence established among them. To stand alone against feminine dislike and masculine views of good-form requires a toughness of character and an indifference to personal reputation or advancement which one cannot expect from many of the young Englishmen and Englishwomen who come out. These usually spring from a caste bred upon rather rigid observances, and they look to the opinion of their own caste almost entirely for the sanction of conduct. At first they are astonished that Anglo-Indian opinion not only permits but imposes so ill-bred a manner in intercourse with "natives," but the astonishment soon wears off, and the infection of arrogance catches them as a matter of course. The Governor of Bombay once told me it was impossible to convert "bounders" into gentlemen by Act of Parliament, and, unfortunately, that is true; else we might

enjoy a more enviable reputation in the world. But I was astonished to find how easily an apparent gentleman may become entirely the opposite if he finds himself set up as one of a superior race among a polite and gentle people, always too much inclined to submit to rudeness with reverential astonishment.

Dr. Lefroy, the Bishop of Lahore, who for a quarter of a century has striven with constancy and some success to restore the higher tradition of our race, has said that, but for railways, all might be well. And it is quite true that the commonest and most flagrant instances of Anglo-Indian vulgarity are to be found in trains. But that is chiefly because it is most often in trains that the two races meet on terms of nominal equality. On almost every railway journey one sees instances of ill-manners that would appear too outrageous for belief at home. But it is the same throughout. In hotels, clubs, bungalows, and official chambers, the people of the country, and especially the educated classes, are treated with an habitual contumely more exasperating than savage persecution. I gladly admit that in every part of India I found Englishmen who still retained the courtesy and sensitiveness of ordinary good manners. But one's mere delight in finding them proved their rarity. Anglo-Indians tell us constantly that our first thought must be to maintain our national prestige, and if arrogance will do it, our prestige is safe. But when I watched the

Anglo-Indian behaviour towards Indians themselves, I often wondered whether prestige is really to be secured by manners such as we should hardly find among "bounders" at home. For myself, I should have thought Lord Morley was right when he said that "bad manners, overbearing manners, are very disagreeable in all countries, but India is the only country where bad and overbearing manners are a political crime." *

Unhappily, the justice of Indian complaints on this subject was not new to me, when I came to Madras. Every one finds proofs of it from the moment of landing in Bombay, and, in fact, even on board ship. The social estrangement between the two races rapidly increases after Port Said is left. But in Madras I found another cause of deep dissatisfaction. In spite of all I had heard about injustice in particular cases, in spite of the old demand for police reform and the separation of the judicial and executive functions now combined in the District Magistrate, it was disconcerting to discover a prevailing and uneasy suspicion that British justice could not safely be trusted. Certainly, much disquietude had recently been roused by a few special instances, at Rawal Pindi, Lahore, and elsewhere. "Killing no murder, outrage no crime, when Indians are concerned and Englishmen the culprits": that was the common conclusion, and it was not unnatural.

* Speech at Arbroath, October 21, 1907.

But the suspicion arose from more general and permanent causes as well. There remains the standing sense of wrong, because an Englishman has the right to a different form of trial from an Indian. A magistrate with power to inflict a two years' sentence on an Indian, may inflict only six months on a European. No Indian may try a criminal case against a European, and in criminal cases a European may claim a jury, with a majority of Europeans on it. Lord Ripon's attempt gradually to modify these distinctions is one of the well-remembered events of his famous Viceroyalty—one of the many reasons which have endeared his name to India as no other Viceroy's is endeared — but his endeavour was thwarted.

As to the separation of functions, the Viceroy's Council, through Sir Harvey Adamson, has lately (March, 1908) promised an experiment with this purpose in Eastern Bengal; but in India generally the District Magistrate who tries cases himself, or arranges for their trial by his subordinates, also controls the police, and in nearly all cases the police bring the charge. The injustice of this arrangement, with all its opportunities for official influence on legal decisions, has long been so obvious that one would have thought the cost of the change was the only obstacle to it. But while I did not hear much about the danger of increased cost, I heard a great deal about the danger of

diminished dignity, if the District Magistrate lost either half of his functions. After a battle of over half a century, we may hope, however, that this grievance is now to disappear.

On the other hand, I found that the old scandals about the police had survived Sir Andrew Fraser's commission of inquiry (1902). Promotion still went in practice by the number of convictions obtained, and convictions too often depended on evidence derived by the police from the accused themselves — so-called "confessions," extorted by means which, rightly or wrongly, were spoken of with horror among the people, and even among Anglo-Indians. Between his arrest and his sentence the prisoner was left in the hands of the police, and at their mercy, thus giving them the opportunity of compelling him to give evidence to his own detriment. Wherever I went in India I heard the same complaint of the unscrupulousness and corruption of the police. Some of the British police officers with whom I became intimate, appeared to be experienced and sympathetic men, struggling rather hopefully on the side of reform. But the pay of the ordinary native policeman is so ludicrously small (from 8*s.* to 10*s.* a month), even when the low scale of wages in India is considered, that the constant temptation to extortion can hardly be resisted, especially among a population so indifferent to this world and so deferential to authority, that even

the innocent will volunteer bribes in hopes of being left in peace.

The drink question in Madras is much the same as in the rest of India. In a sense, it is worse even than in England, for we see one of the most temperate and frugal populations of the world gradually taking to drink as a new habit.* The increase of drink is largely due to education, largely to the example of Europeans and of Indians lately returned from Europe; partly, in Madras at all events, to Christianized Indians who claim the right of casting off all the old restrictions of Indian behaviour. As in England, the Government does not escape its share of blame, owing to the large revenue derived from the drink trade. The Excise or "Abkari" Department sells the licences by auction, the bidding is keen, and it is difficult to prevent the purchaser of a licence from setting up business in the most lucrative position he can find. By a series of resolutions in February, 1890, the Government of India declared its intention of reducing the drink traffic, especially by the restriction of shops. Nevertheless, the traffic has very largely increased, and if the number of shops has not increased in proportion, they have

* This increase is probably shown in the rapid increase of the Excise Revenue, which rose from £3,742,800 in 1897 to £5,687,820 in 1906. Of the latter sum "country spirits" yielded nearly £3,000,000, and "toddy" (the popular drink made from the toddy palm), £874,000.

been opened near market places, bathing ghats, schools, hospitals, temples, factories, and other places of common resort, where, as Sir Frederic Lely has said, they serve as "veritable traps to catch the weak, the thirsty, and the tired."

It is difficult to define how far the most paternal of Governments is responsible for the excesses of its children, to whom it refuses the common rights of grown men. The evils of the drink traffic in India were not to be compared with the evils I had seen in West and Central Africa, nor were they so pronounced in Madras as in Calcutta. But the growth of the drinking habit—mainly European in origin—must be added to the other more prominent causes of unrest, even among a population so peaceful and backward as Madras is considered to be in comparison with Poona. Hatred of drink as something equally deadly and foreign was one of the causes why the Swadeshi movement, starting from Eastern Bengal, had spread in less than two years throughout the whole country. Of that movement I had already seen many evidences. In Bombay I had seen the Indian cotton-mills working against time to meet the demand for *saris* and *dhotis* (women's and men's cloths) free from the taint of foreign profit. And now in Madras I found the Swadeshi movement very strong. "None but Swadeshi goods," "Buy our Nationalist cottons," "Try our Bande Mataram cigarettes," were the most telling advertisements a

Dance of High Caste Girls in Madras.

[*Face p.* 122.

shop could write up or insert in the native newspapers, which are particularly strong and excellent in Madras.

One wealthy Hindu had ventured even in manufacture to follow the extreme party which said: "Let the English go their way. We will ask no share in their government and take none. We will neither appeal to their law courts nor accept salaries as their officials. We must pay their taxes, but otherwise we will forget that these foreigners are among us at all." He had determined to set up a cotton works without the aid even of imported machinery. Collecting members of the old weaving caste, he erected a bamboo factory of hand-looms, where they were turning out the beautiful fabrics of Indian work, little more expensive than the English machine-made stuffs and four times as durable. The experiment is exposed to some of the dangers of conscious revivals—the dangers of "Arts and Crafts." But hand-loom weaving still retains a quite natural life in many parts of India, in spite of the British manufacturers' long endeavours to kill the Indian weaving industry. When I visited his simple factory among the palms north of Madras, he told me he could not keep pace with the demands of the Hindu women. And if the women who buy cotton cloth for their *saris* and children's bits of clothing are willing to give a few farthings more for native and national work, in a district where

they have to toil all day for a wage of twopence, it shows that the national spirit, even in philosophic and devotional Madras, is reaching far beyond the limits of the class that our own most highly educated classes taunt and sneer at as "educated Indians."

CHAPTER VI

On the Beach

It was evening, and the sky was full of the deep and ominous colours of an Indian sunset in the rains. A hot wind blowing in from the sea threw the waves in heavy surf upon the sand. Up and down the long "Marina," or esplanade, bordered by a few vast public offices and a few fishermen's hovels, the last carriages were bearing home Anglo-Indian ladies or youths comfortably wearied with their polo and other games. But on the broad, dry sand, between the esplanade and the surf, a vast circle of people was gathered round a little platform and chair. They were seated by hundreds on the sand—between four and five thousand of them altogether—and round the outer edge of the seated circle hundreds more were standing upright, like the rim of a flat plate.

When the meeting began their dark and eager faces could still be seen in the sunset light. The faces disappeared, and only the brilliant white turbans and white draperies were visible by the

flicker of a big lamp they had fitted upon the platform. The waning moon rose late and shapeless among heavy clouds, and the dark faces reappeared, outlined in silver ; but still the crowd sat on.

All were men, and most of them were young. They had assembled to show their joy at the release of Ajit Singh and Lajpat Rai—both inhabitants of the far-off Punjab, one till lately an unknown youth, the other till lately hardly known to any one in Madras, and only known anywhere as a reformer of Hindu superstitions, a man of austere private life and inexhaustible liberality to his own people.* Now both had been raised by their deportation and imprisonment without trial to the position of heroes and martyrs, and their recent release (Nov. 11, 1907) had been greeted with joy throughout the country, though not with gratitude ; for there is no great cause for gratitude when a wrong-doer undoes the wrong.

Through the middle of the crowd came a line of white-robed students carrying a yellow banner with a strange device. "Bande Mataram ! Bande Mataram ! Hail to the Motherland ! we bow before our mother ! " rose the familiar cry from the thousands seated there. But there was no wild gesticulation, no frantic excess, such as we might imagine in a fanatical East. A Trafalgar Square crowd is more demonstrative and unrestrained.

* Introduction, p. 20.

Nor was a single soldier or policeman visible, though the occasion had been publicly announced as a meeting of the Extremists. In the audience I was of course the only European present.

A little boy with head half shaven and a long tuft of black hair at the back stood up before the platform, and amid complete silence sang in his native Tamil the Bengali song of "Bande Mataram," which has now become the national song of India. The music is of that queer Eastern kind, nasal, quavering, full of turns and twists, such as one may hear from the Adriatic to Burma, and very likely beyond. In origin I believe it to be Persian; at all events I have heard it in highest perfection on the Persian frontier and sung by Persian musicians. Usually—in Greek for instance—the words are rendered difficult to distinguish owing to the twists and long-drawn phrases, but in this boy's singing the words were fairly distinct, and the repeated cadence gave a certain solemnity.

The words of the song were by a Bengali poet, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, who introduced it into his historic novel called "Anandamath," or "The Abbey of Joy," a romance upon the rebellion of the austere Sanyasi Order against the decaying rule of the Mohammedans in Eastern Bengal when Warren Hastings was the real power. The best-known translation is by Mr. W. H. Lee, late of the Indian Civil Service. It is fairly close, but English

cannot reproduce the compression of the original Sanscrit and Bengali mixed :—

"My Motherland, I sing
Her splendid streams, her glorious trees,
The zephyr from the far-off Vindyan heights,
Her fields of waving corn,
The rapturous radiance of her moonlit nights,
The trees in flower that flame afar,
The smiling days that sweetly vocal are,
The happy, blessed Motherland.
Her will by seventy million throats extolled,
Her power twice seventy million arms uphold ;
Her strength let no man scorn.
Thou art my head, thou art my heart,
My life and soul art thou,
My song, my worship, and my art,
Before thy feet I bow.
As Durga, scourge of all thy foes,
As Lakshmi, bowered in the flower,
That in the water grows,
As Bani, wisdom, power ;
The source of all our might,
Our every temple doth thy form unfold—
Unequalled, tender, happy, pure,
Of splendid streams, of glorious trees,
My Motherland I sing,
The stainless charm that shall endure,
And verdant banks and wholesome breeze,
That with her praises ring."

It is obviously too tender for a stirring "Marseillaise." There is not enough march and thunder either in words or tune to enflame the soul of trampling hosts. The thunder comes in the cry of "Bande Mataram !" But the tenderness, the devoted love of country, and the adoration of

motherhood are all characteristic of the Indian mind.

When this national anthem was finished, the Tamil poet of Madras recited a lament he had written for Lajpat Rai at the time of his deportation. It was the common lament of exiles—the fond memory of home, the deep attachment to the land of childhood, the loneliness of life among strangers and unknown tongues—all very quietly and simply told. Then by a sudden change, the poet turned to satire, and described a dialogue between Mr. John Morley and India, on the subject of Swaraj or Home Rule :—

> "You are disunited," says Mr. Morley; "what have you to do with Home Rule? You don't speak the same language, you haven't got the same religion; what have you to do with Home Rule? You cannot fight, you are too fond of law, you are the victims of education; what have you to do with Home Rule? You are born slaves, you prostrate yourselves before the Englishman: what have you to do with Home Rule? You are seditious, you are a prairie on fire, you are a barrel of gunpowder, you cry for the moon, you are not fit for a fur coat; what have you to do with Home Rule?" *

To which India makes firm and dignified reply. She has tasted freedom, she has learnt from England herself what freedom is; even John Morley has been her teacher, and she will not cease to labour

* See Introduction, p. 26 ff., Mr. Morley's speech at Arbroath.

for Swaraj. Having drunk the nectar of freedom, can she turn back to the palm-tree "toddy" of a Government shop, or cease to labour for Swaraj? She claims the right of other nations, the rights for which England herself has fought; she claims the same freedom of person and of speech, and she will not cease to labour for Swaraj. From north to south her people are becoming united, from east to west the cry of "Bande Mataram" goes up, and slowly the sun of freedom is arising: it may rise slowly, but India will not cease to labour for Swaraj.

The chairman rose, and the darkening air glimmered with the petals of flowers thrown in handfuls, as the custom is. Round his neck heavy garlands were hung, pink and white, to match the lesser garlands which surrounded the photographs of the two national heroes on the table. He spoke in English, like all the subsequent speakers till the last. One felt at once how great a contribution to Indian unity the English rule makes in the gift of a common language which all educated men can understand, while even in Madras alone four distinct native languages are spoken. He summarized the history of the last year of suspicion, repression, deportation, imprisonment, flogging of boys and students for political causes, and the Seditious Meetings Act. It was all done without passion or exaggeration, and he ended with a simple

resolution calling on the Government to repeal the deportation statute as contrary to the rights which England had secured for herself under the *Habeas Corpus*.

Four speakers supported the resolution, and all spoke with the same quiet reasonableness, so different from our conception of the Oriental mind. But for clapping of hands, and occasional shouts of "Bande Mataram!" or "Jai!" (literally "Victory!" or "Long live So-and-so!"), the immense crowd remained equally calm. There was no frenzy, no disorder, no excitement, beyond intense interest and desire to leave no word unheard. If a speaker was just a shade too emotional the crowd laughed a little scornfully, just as an English crowd does. They laughed when one speaker—a well-known writer and journalist of Madras—just overstepped the limits in recalling, with tears in his voice, those happy days when as a student he had sucked the enthusiasm for freedom from John Morley's own books, and had learnt to regard him as one of the gods of literature and liberty, in the same great pantheon with Mill and Burke and Milton. The crowd knew the man was in earnest, and they applauded, but they laughed just a little scornfully. For the rest, the speaking was average straightforward stuff, free from flowers, and even free from quotations, which are the besetting tendency of many Indian minds. Indeed, I remember only

one quotation—just a hint at a parody on Mark Antony's speech, with John Morley and the Liberal Government as the honourable men.

Only Anglo-Indians could have called the speeches seditious. To a common type of Anglo-Indian mind any criticism of the Government, any claim to further freedom, is sedition. But though this was avowedly a meeting of Extremists, the claim in the speeches was for the simple human rights that other peoples enjoy—the right to a voice in their own affairs, and in the spending of their own money. As to the increased suppression and persecution now overhanging them, they might well be driven to despair. Other grievances they had long known, and ever since Lord Curzon came to India their complaints had been augmented. But they had always kept a belief in England's respect for personal rights and freedom, till Mr. Morley, of all statesmen, came to overthrow it. What was left to hope for now?

So the meeting went on, till four speakers had spoken long, and the late moon was moving up among the clouds and stars. Then a new speaker rose—tall, dark, and aged, with clearly cut features, and a shaven head. His dress was of deep salmon-coloured cotton—saffron, with a tinge of red—and in one hand he held a wanderer's staff, symbolic of control over thought, speech, and action. Once he had been a rich man, a barrister, a councillor, a

leader of public life. Now he had given away all he possessed. He had discarded the mark of worship and the sacred thread. Having said farewell to family and friends, to business, politics, and all transitory things, he had set off with only a staff to wander through India, begging his bread and teaching the divine realities, on which he meditated day and night. To this meeting he had come, not to discuss mortal justice or the British rule—things that hardly throw a shadow on the radiance of eternity—but only to say that in his wanderings he had met with Lajpat Rai, and had found in him a saintly human soul, simple-hearted, austere, and regardless of possessions. He spoke in his childhood's Tamil, and when he had finished speaking he went upon his way, while the meeting dispersed, and dying shouts of "Bande Mataram!" mingled with the roaring of the surf.

CHAPTER VII

THE FLOODS OF ORISSA

THE holy region of Orissa, where stand the temples of Juggernath, "Lord of the World," and of Tribhuvaneshwar, less famous but "Lord of Three Worlds" all the same, needs what wealth of holiness it has got, for its earthly fortunes are small. The ancient Uriya people live there, speaking a strange and separate language, though it is said to be near akin to an ancient Sanscrit form, and using a script like wire netting or a series of circles in a row. In the southern district near Ganjam they are still counted as part of the Madras Presidency, but all the rest of their country is now limited to Bengal, and its officials are responsible to the Lieutenant-Governor in Calcutta. The greater part of the land is held by Tributary Chiefs and Rajahs, under the control of a Political Agent, but a good deal is owned by ordinary zemindars or landlords who sub-let to peasants much in the usual way, come under the authority of the usual Commissioners and Collectors of the Civil Service, and about two-thirds of them

pay a land-tax or rent to Government, nominally fixed every thirty years, because they are not included in the Permanent Settlement of Bengal. There are also a few cultivators holding direct from Government.

So far the peasants of Orissa are not worse off than other people who have to live at the mercy of landowners. Their special hardship comes from the nature of the country and from "visitations of God," as they are called; though why God's visitations are regarded only as evil it is difficult to understand. Looking inland from the coast, one can see the beginning of mountain ranges running far into the interior, and it is there that the Tributary Chiefs and Rajahs have their territories, there that hill-tribes live, and wandering elephants abound. But between the mountains and the sea lies a broad belt of alluvial plain. It is under British control, but permeated by uncertain and changeable rivers that issue like wild animals from the mountains and refuse control of any kind. Such rivers are the Byturni, a sacred stream, where millions of pilgrims bathe on their way down the Grand Trunk Road to the shrine of Juggernath; the Brahmani, also sacred as its name denotes, but the chief cause of the present profane disasters; and the Mahanadi, which threatens the old capital city of Cuttack, and is sometimes a desert of sand, sometimes a sea.

In August rain had fallen on the mountains for

fifteen days and nights without ceasing. Foot by foot the water in the sacred rivers rose. The islands disappeared, the broad miles of sand disappeared, the water reached the edge of the steep mud banks. Forty years before it had done the same, and old people began to awake their appalling memories. At a point called Janardan Ghai, not far from Jenapur, upon the Brahmani, the embankment had then given way. The breach had never been properly repaired; only lately a rubble "bund" or break-water had been constructed, and now on August 20th, in the middle of the night, it gave way again. In a dark torrent, bearing sand and stones with it, the irresistible river streamed over all the lower lands around, covering the crops and melting the mud villages away like ant-heaps. The land is flat, but in the confusion and darkness the people crowded up any little slope for safety, or climbed into trees; and one woman had her baby born as she supported herself among the branches. When morning came, eight feet of turbulent water lay over their homes and crops. In November I could still trace the tidemark of the flood by tufts of dried grass and drift-wood sticking in the trees high above my head, as you may do in early summer on the banks of the Severn.

When I reached Orissa, the first sign I saw of the calamity was a band of thirty or forty brown skeletons crawling towards me as I stood in a garden at Cuttack. They said they had walked from their

HUNGER. [*Face p.* 136.

ruined homes beside the Brahmani, looking for work or food, and hundreds were wandering over the country in the same way, even as far as Calcutta, which they counted a fortnight's walk from there. Probably they had heard of my arrival, and collected in the vague hope of some kind of assistance, or perhaps simply from the instinct that makes most people fling their misery before any human being for sympathy. Very likely some were habitual beggars, worn thin by man's want of charity, and taking the advantage of extra numbers to impress me. A man of stone would have been impressed. There is no need to describe a brown skeleton—the projecting ribs and spiny backbone, the legs and arms like withered sticks, the deep pits at the collar-bones, the loose and crinkly skin. But when a party of brown skeletons fling themselves flat on the ground before you, with arms outstretched beyond their heads and faces rubbing in the dust, when they take your feet in their bones and lay their skulls upon your boots, what are you to do? What are you to do when there are fifteen hundred men, women, and children only waiting to catch sight of you that they may make the same irresistible and hopeless appeal?

I went to the officials. The Collector, under whose immediate charge the problem of relief came, was away, but I had a long interview with the Commissioner in his beautiful home, built on an ancient

stone embankment that protects the town from the river, then hardly visible in the wide expanse of sand. In the case of both officials I observed the same difficulties that I found in official life wherever I came across it in India. Both I believe to have been entirely honourable and conscientious men, devoted to their rather monotonous but responsible work, from which they could gain no great glory beyond the usual steps of promotion, ending in retirement to the obscurity of some English golf-links. One of them, as I heard afterwards, had a high reputation among his colleagues in the Service for his solicitude on behalf of the people under his charge. He studied their language and customs with enthusiasm, and on one occasion had displayed conspicuous gallantry in defending them from a gang of pillaging outlaws, whom he captured single-handed. Yet he was not the more popular of the two ; and though both were, I think, rather exceptional public servants, they were regarded with more hostility than veneration. The curse of ordinary officials is that reform means change, and change means trouble. But a conscientious official has the further curse that, under the constant pressure of work, he is compelled to spend most of his time among papers, statistics, and abstractions. To preserve his sanity under these conditions, the Indian official is forced to the Club, where he can relax his mind among his own people, speak his own language,

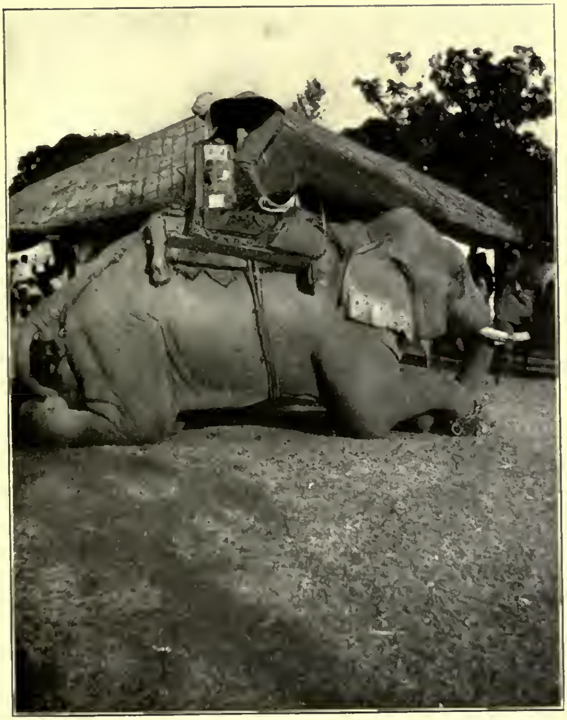
and follow the pursuits that really interest our race, and so, little by little, the people of the country, for whose sake alone he is supposed to be there, appear to him only under the form of cases or numbers—inhuman subjects, to be avoided in polite conversation.

The Commissioner, from among his barricades of reports, abstracts, and regulations, gave me the official figures of distress, as far as was ascertained at the end of the third month after the disaster. They showed an estimated area of 460 square miles affected by the flood, with a peasant population of over 300,000 ; also so many houses swept away, so much loss in cattle and horses, so many deaths from cholera after the flood (nearly 2000), and so many rupees already distributed in relief. From what I saw and heard afterwards, I should put the numbers reduced to a skeleton condition at about 5 per cent. of the 300,000 population. That does not sound very much, but if you work it out, it gives 15,000 brown skeletons close to the touch of death by hunger.

For myself, I cannot think in thousands. I trust economists and officials to do that for me. But there was one phrase in the official statement that appeared quite comprehensible even to me : it was, "Deaths from starvation, nil." Nothing could well be more explicit, yet even that simple assertion began to look as elusive as other economics when I

went out into the villages and saw the bony corpses and was told the official cause of death is always some innocent and unavoidable sickness like cholera or "bowel complaint," and that the official mind has a rooted objection to starvation.

First I went up the line to a place called Balasore, and late at night visited two Settlement Camps, where a revision of land-titles was slowly going on, in view of the next great Settlement which was to take place in twenty years' time. It was a recent idea of Sir Andrew Fraser, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who with Scottish providence aimed at thus reducing the work that would await his fourth successor in office for the year or two before the next Settlement came. It is true that the present revision would require further revisions before then, but that did not matter. With this laudable object, Indian officials were seated in their tents, and just visible by lanterns a crowd of forty or fifty small holders from neighbouring villages were gathered round them, all clutching their precious title-deeds to their bosoms. For six days they had been waiting there from nine in the morning to eleven at night, just at the time when harvest needed them most. An official told me it took about a month to complete the revision in a circle of twenty-one villages, and the work never stopped but for the rains. Outside one tent an enterprising shopkeeper had opened a little store of plantains, rice, and cakes to feed



My Elephant.

A Village Crowd.

[Face p. 140.

the patient crowd. Some were little boys whose fathers had died, some represented widows. So under the dispensation of Scottish providence they waited, and one can only hope that the officials of eighteen or nineteen years hence will think of them kindly while enjoying the far-off interest of their tears.

Next day I returned to Jenapur, and mounted a large elephant, which, sad to say, could heartily enjoy a daily meal that would keep any Hindu in prime condition for six weeks. As upon a watch-tower, for the next few days I passed up and down the long line of flat country that had been flooded beside the Brahmani, sometimes crossing over into the basin of the Kharsua, another of the uncertain rivers that alternately save and devastate the land. Where it was not devastated, the country was thickly cultivated in little fields of rice, pulse, and a kind of millet, and the numbers of planted mango-trees gave it much the same look as an elm-row part of Essex or the Midlands. Throughout the district rice was certainly the staple crop, because, though it is so risky and wants so much water, its yield is magnificent when it yields at all ; and it was one of the ironies of India that, while here the land had been ruined by the deluge of rain, on the way up from Madras I passed through miles on miles of rice fields where the crops stood dying of drought, or were already cut as straw for thatch or as fodder

for the sacred cow. Even here the drought had been so severe since the flood that the inferior crops of grain and pulse had failed and could not be used to alleviate the distress.

But in many of the villages that I visited neither flood nor drought will matter for many years. Sand like the seashore had covered crops, and fields, and boundaries, and homes in one indistinguishable desert. At the first village I came to after my elephant had waded through the numerous shallow channels into which the river had now sunk, a crowd of naked people—two or three hundred, I suppose—had assembled round a Government agent who was issuing little doles of rice. Similar doles had been issued soon after the disaster three months before, but otherwise the people had received nothing from a fatherly Government, because rain was officially due, and they ought officially to have lived on the subsidiary crops nurtured by the rain. But the heavens did not comply with official expectations; cholera came instead, and now the people were dying, not, of course, from starvation, but from "bowel complaints."

At sight of me upon the elephant, the people left their doles and flung themselves prostrate upon the hot sand which had ruined them. Some brought hoes, and digging three feet down, they showed a few withered blades from what had once been a rice-field. To that thickness the sand lay over

acres and miles of country along the low land beside the river, and now on the top of the sand the hungry villagers flung themselves flat in their appeal. Surely a man who rode an elephant and wore a helmet, and was white by courtesy, could save them! What could I do? There were 15,000 living skeletons ready to join in that prayer, and I had one pocketful of coppers. Rice was selling at 1½*d.* a pound; it takes two pounds a day to feed a man decently, and the full wage for a working cultivator was twopence in ordinary times. Where is charity when things are like that? And where are economics?

As usual, it was the hangers-on to life who suffered most. Weavers are useful people, and the village weaver with his wooden hand-loom can hardly be called a hanger-on in a land where every man and woman wears several yards of woven cotton, and washes the garment at least once a day. But how can a weaver live unless women buy his stuff? And how can a woman buy his stuff when she has just sold her doorposts and the family brass dish to buy food for her children, or to pay the police tax for the protection of property? She makes her old rags do, and the weaver starves. There were starving weavers in all the villages, and some it seemed impossible to save even with the food represented by a gift of twopence.

It was the same with the landless labourers who

worked under the ryots for wages. It was the same with the village blind, the village idiots, and the lepers. No one could afford to employ labour now or to give alms. In one village a labourer had scooped a little hole in the ground, and fitted a plantain leaf neatly into it as a bowl for gifts. But charity was as dry as the heavens, and no alms fell. I saw the plantain leaf still vainly appealing, but the man had died of hunger. In another village they were carrying a body to the fire, and they laid the poor, naked thing down for me to see. It was a woman's body, a labourer's sister, shrivelled and spiky with hunger, like the skeleton of a starved cat found under the slates. In defence of her brother, the labourer himself, I must say that he was dying of hunger too.

The village houses in this part of Orissa, as in most parts of India, are built of mud plastered on to a bamboo framework, with wooden doorposts and rafters. They are thatched with rice straw or palm branches. At the first rush of the flood, the houses dissolved like children's castles in the tide, and I saw flat and bare plots of land where they had stood. Even the houses that had escaped the water were almost as bare, for the people had been obliged to sell the scanty stock of furniture that Hindu villagers possess—brass pots and plates, a corn bin, cooking vessels, and perhaps a bed—in order to pay the rent which the zemindars or landlords continued to

exact, though I was told the officials had ordered a suspension.

The native official "tahsildars," acting as village tax-collectors, had also compelled them to sell everything they had, even to their wooden door-posts, as I said, for paying the "chaukidari" tax (or "tikut," as they call it) which supports the village police. It is a small tax, paid quarterly, and running from a halfpenny up to 1*s.* 4*d.* a month per house, but the police pay used formerly to be raised from special plots of land set apart in each village for the purpose, and the imposition of a hut-tax for the purpose ten years ago had always been regarded as a grievance. Nor does it matter whether a tax is great or small when you have to sell the family plate, valued at eighteenpence, to pay it. Just before my journey through the country, this tax had also been officially remitted, but it was collected up to a day or two previously, and was always mentioned by the people as one of their most irritating grievances. No one loves a tax-collector, but in time of famine there is something particularly galling in selling one's property to feed the police for preserving it.

In Orissa itself and in Calcutta the British officials were being rather angrily criticized for negligence, but apart from the necessary failure of a system which tries to administer welfare through foreign rulers who live completely isolated from the

people, I do not think the officials were to blame. They had given a little relief at first. When the rains that ought to have fallen did not fall, they gave a little more. They remitted a tax, and called on the zemindars to remit rent. They did not discourage a band of Indian volunteers, some of whom belonged to a reforming Vedantic Order in Calcutta, from distributing private relief. Sir Andrew Fraser, Lieut.-Governor of Bengal, who was then on progress through Orissa, and spent a day in the famine district, told me relief works were just going to be undertaken, and the Government expected to spend about £20,000 on the business of keeping alive and starting again. He probably knew as much about starvation in the abstract as any official could, for he was in control of the relief in the Central Provinces during the terrible famine of 1900.* The officials had also made the usual advances, called "takavi" loans, to holders of two to ten acres for the purchase of new seed and stock upon the security of their holding.

On the whole, the violent personal attacks upon the officials appeared to arise chiefly from the habit of all peoples who are compelled to submit to a fatherly despotism. Being themselves excluded from a voice in their destiny, they turn savagely upon the Government whenever distress or disorder

* "The Great Famine," by Mr. Vaughan Nash (Longmans, 1900).

supervenes, and the only real hope I could see in the situation was the appearance of the little bands of volunteers who in true Swadeshi spirit were spreading the conception of self-reliance throughout India. Sir Andrew Fraser and the higher officials welcomed their efforts, but the average Anglo-Indians and the journalists of Calcutta either treated them with contempt, or shrieked "sedition!"

Whatever blame lay with the authorities seemed to arise from the usual official tendency to make light of distress for fear of increasing difficulties, and to temper benevolence with bad manners. I think both tendencies were interestingly combined in a Bengali Deputy Magistrate, who was superintending the relief in one of the larger villages. I was myself travelling with Mr. Madhu Sudan Das, a resident of Cuttack, highly educated on European lines, the only Uriya graduate of Calcutta, and a man well known throughout India for his unlimited generosity and devotion to his own people, whose rights he had often vindicated against aggression. From early manhood he had been a Christian, though perhaps not a very dogmatic and ecclesiastical Christian, his faith being founded entirely upon his heartfelt admiration of Christ's prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "The man who could utter that prayer while dying under torture was divine," he often said to me. "The moment I heard the prayer, I

recognized that truth, and I have never doubted it since."

But Christian though he was, and though his daughter had studied in Cambridge, and now lived in Cuttack like an English lady without a shade of "purdah," he was almost worshipped as the saint of Orissa by the poor among his countrymen. I have seen a man with a frightful running sore entreat Mr. Das to lend him the eighth of a penny that he might touch the sore with it and be healed. Another came with a brass bowl and implored Mr. Das to dip his finger into the water that his wife might be delivered from her dangerous labour, and the moment he dipped his finger into the water, the child was safely born.

Unhappily, in spite of his Christianity and saintly reputation, Mr. Das appeared to act on official minds much as a hedgehog would on a naked man who found one rolled up in his bed. On arriving one night at a dak-bungalow or rest-house, we found that two of the three rooms were occupied by a Bengali magistrate and a colleague. So having arranged that Mr. Das, who was oldish and invalid, should have the other room while I slept in the free air like the elephant, we sent in our names to the Deputy Magistrate and were invited to enter. Knowing Mr. Das well by reputation, he had evidently determined not to fall below the standard of European dignity. Consequently he received us

with his legs on the long arms of his deck-chair — an attitude which, I suppose, he had observed as customary among English officials when they receive "natives," and I could not correct his impression.

Mr. Das began by requesting him to hear the petitions of three or four widows who stood lamenting outside the door because their husbands had died of starvation. Entrenched behind his legs, the official refused to comply, stating that he had already heard their cases, and had proved to his own satisfaction that the men had not died of starvation, but of something else. Mr. Das then went through a number of other cases, in most of which the official said he thought he had made examination, but could not be sure. Anyhow, all charges of neglect or harshness against the officials were absolutely false, and he was not there to be cross-examined. With prickly insistence, Mr. Das continued his interrogations upon the complaints of the villagers, till at last the Deputy Magistrate, irritated past human endurance, refused to say any more, and waving good-night to his boots we left the room.

On our return journey, a day or two later, we discovered that he had sent out orders by the *chaukidars* or village police to all the villages round, commanding the people not to come out to meet us under threats of unknown penalties. So great

is the terror inspired by officials and police under a bureaucracy, that very few came of the hundreds who had before thronged our path in hopes of winning some assistance, or merely of seeing the elephant and their national favourite. The few who did come told us the truth with fear, and perhaps we should never have got at the real facts if we had not found a chaukidar in one village actually going round from house to house with the order. Yet Mr. Das was a man whose assistance in such a crisis any one but an official would have been delighted to secure; for the people trusted him absolutely, in spite of his foreign religion, and no one living understood them better. It was only that he was the kind of man who perturbs tabulated columns.

Most administrators would find it much easier to appreciate a Rajah or Tributary Chief who lived about twenty miles from Cuttack, and expended, as I was told, £335 on a breakfast which he expected to offer the Lieutenant-Governor with the usual trimmings of dancing-girls, fireworks, and other delights. At such a breakfast cases of starvation could hardly occur, and nothing would interrupt the cheers, loyalty, and good-will, such as Simla and the Anglo-Indian papers were expecting from the proposed Advisory Councils of Notables. Yet £335 did seem a largish sum to consume at one meal in the midst of a starving people. Perhaps the

Lieutenant-Governor thought so too, for I believe he continued his progress without accepting the entertainment. One would like to know how that meal was ever consumed. Perhaps the elephants were called in to help.

CHAPTER VIII

"Lord of the World"

From every part of India, by day and night, the pilgrims come, and the roads to the great temple, by the sea at Puri, are always open and always thronged. The pilgrims come from behind the white mountains, and from the purple lands of the south, and across the hot plains from the other ocean. The train that shot me out upon the sand amid a crowd of dim white figures at three o'clock one morning raises a high dividend from religion. Hundreds come by it every day, for it saves time—and under British rule even devotion goes by time. But worshippers still think it more religious and purifying to make the whole journey on foot, visiting other sacred temples upon the road, bathing in holy rivers, and turning at every dawn towards the rising sun, as all mankind instinctively turn for worship, just as for love we turn towards the sunset. To take years upon the journey only extends the glory of expectation, and if you have the holy patience to travel the Grand Trunk Road, measuring every two yards of

THE TEMPLE OF EQUALITY.

[*Face p.* 152.

its thousand miles by prostrating your body along the dust, what is space, what is time, when you are on the way to God?

Children and young mothers come if the entire family sets out for holiness, but the best time for the great act of worship is late in middle-age, when for many years the field has been sown and reaped, the buffalo fed, the taxes paid, the children tended, the cotton garment daily washed. Then the present career upon this visible world is almost over, the shadowy gate to the next stage upward is almost in sight. Then men and women long to go on pilgrimage, and, untouched by the cares of fortune, family, or any transitory things, they travel forth in calm elation of soul, their thoughts fixed only on the lasting realities of eternity, till they hear the thud of the long waves upon the sand, and before them rises the great white tower of the Lord of the Universe, surmounted by its wheel and flag. There stands at length the beatific vision, there the end of all these labours, the revelation of the Divine Essence for which they had waited so many years of repeated seasons in the fields.

It is the ancient temple of Juggernath, "Lord of the World," to which they have come. Yes, our old friend Juggernath, of childhood's stories and journalistic tags—the God in the Car, before whose bloodstained wheels the benighted heathen were driven by deceiving priests to fling themselves

shrieking down, before the days when enlightened missionaries and British rulers combined to clean up India's coral strand. Since then, as is well known, such extremity of devotion has been prosecuted as the law directs, and the guide-book tells us that "of recent years much has been done to improve the sanitation of the place." Both signs of progress are good. But, after all, it is only an Englishman whose first thought is of sanitation when he approaches the divine presence, and the British missionaries who first told that weary old tale of the car were as incapable of understanding the divine passion that, even at the cost of life, yearns for union with eternal powers, as they would have been of understanding the passion of a woman whose grandson described to me how, with proud bearing and joyful face, she walked from her chamber and sat down in the midst of the flames beside her husband's body till their ashes lay indistinguishably commingled. Sanitary appliances and the "Merry Widow" appeal more successfully to our Western minds.

The fame of Juggernath may be due, as scholars say, to some ancient attempt to conciliate under his symbol the new Buddhistic reformers with the primeval Hindu worship. It seems to be certain that his temple as it stands shows the trace of Buddhistic influence—the teaching of Buddha who made the great renunciation, Buddha who received

the poor and all mankind beneath his blessing. It is a shrine of peace and conciliation, perhaps the one place in India where former generations saw some hope of acquiring the new purity and kindliness of life, without rejecting the sacred traditions of immemorial wisdom brought by unknown ancestors from lands of bitter cold. And it may have been this bright hope of peace that first established the unaltering rule of Juggernath's worship, that before his sight all castes and ranks and riches are equal, and the woman is equal with the man.

Lions and monsters guard the four gates of his enclosure, but when once they are passed, all the earthly distinctions of mankind fall away, and only the naked soul remains to worship. Within that oblong wall, Brahman may eat with sweeper, and warrior with the retail seller of flesh for carrion Europeans. Along the inner side of the south wall are simple kitchens, where the god's four hundred cooks daily prepare the sacred food for pilgrims, beggars, and all who come. One is served with another, and all may eat from the same dish, side by side, without contamination. Thousands of monks in the service of the god carry the food far through the country, and the pilgrims themselves take some of it home in their brazen vessels, so that the villagers and children left behind may taste of wisdom, and share the blessings of pilgrimage. For wherever the sacred food is eaten, worldly differences

disappear, and soul stands bare to soul. It is the sacrament of equality, the consecration of mankind.

Side by side with Juggernath, within the dark and secluded shrine, upon which no alien may look, stand his brother and little sister—quaint figures all of them, hideous as gollywogs with symbolism—the round and staring eyes of eternal vision, the atrophied hands and feet of eternal meditation. Every year new cars are built for them, and every twelve years the gods themselves are made anew of wooden blocks, while their old forms are sunk into a pit to perish. This was told me by the treasurer and chief trustee of the god's vast estate, who traced to this renewal the well-known story of the physicians appointed to minister to the deity's health, and put him to bed if he ails. He informed me this was a popular error, but there is a Rajah who is hereditary guardian, and also hereditary sweeper of the temple, and he, as I understood, had rather frequently to be put to bed by his physicians, so that possibly the two cases have become confused.

It would be, perhaps, too curious to identify the little sister of Juggernath with Liberty, and his brother with Fraternity. But Juggernath, "Lord of the World," has beyond question the attribute of Equality, and it seems possible that it is just this glorious attribute, and no deeper metaphysic reason, which gives his temple its place as the most worshipped fane of India, and inspires the common

people with a passionate desire even to touch with one finger the painted board of which he is made. Many people worship what most they fall short of, just as in England we struggle to worship Christ, whose character and manner of life differed so entirely from our own. And of all great virtues the Indians, perhaps, have been most wanting in the sense of equality. Their whole system of existence is based on inequality, inevitable and permanent. The man who is born to study the Vedas will continue to study the Vedas, and so will his son. The man who is born to carry sewage will continue to carry sewage, and so will his son. Nor could the daughter of a millionaire ever hope for marriage with a man of learning, since wisdom lies beyond the dreams of avarice.

This ancient basis of inequality has made the Indian people the easiest in the world to govern. It lies also, I think, at the bottom of their almost excessive politeness, their reverential manners, their courtly deference to any one who appears to have been born of higher station, or with higher advantages. No one denies the charm of such qualities. It is an education in behaviour to pass from a Scottish or American crowd to the streets of an Indian city. The obligations of high caste—such things, I mean, as cleanliness in food and life, intellectual alertness, and disregard of wealth—are as valuable as any obligations laid on Europeans by noblesse. The only

weakness about both is that they are restricted to caste or class, and are not considered universally binding, as such principles must be.

There is much to be said for reverential manners; but take a race which has very little notion of manners of any kind—a race not very sensitive, not very imaginative or sympathetic, trained from boyhood to think little of personal dignity, and nothing at all of other people's feelings ; take such a race and set its most characteristic members from the well-to-do middle classes, with the help of rifles and batteries, to dominate an entirely different people, among whom reverential manners are ingrained by birth, and see what evil effects for both races will result ! Watch the growing arrogance of the dominant people ; watch their demands for deference, their lust for flattery, their irritation at the least sign of independence, their contempt for the race whose obeisance they delight in, their rudeness of manner increasing till it becomes incredible to the relatives they left at home, and would once have been incredible to themselves. Then turn to the subordinate race, and watch the growing weakness of character, the temptation to cringe and flatter, the loss of self-respect, the increasing cowardice, the daily humiliation. In that hideous process—that degeneration in manners of two great races, each of which has high qualities of its own, we recognize the true peril which has been advancing upon Indians and ourselves for

the last ten, or, perhaps, fifty years of Indian history. It is not a question of loss of power, or loss of trade. It is a question of a much more serious loss than these.

But what if all this so-called unrest is only the beginning of another great humanistic reform, another incarnation of that "Lord of the World" whose attribute is equality? Throughout India we are witnessing the birth of a new national consciousness, and with it comes a revival of dignity, a resolve no longer to take insults lying down, not to lick the hand that strikes, or rub the forehead in the dust before any human being, simply because he wears a helmet and is called white. Like pilgrims bound for the shrine of Juggernath in an ecstasy of devotion, the leaders of India are inspired by that longing for equality which is always springing afresh in human minds. If any one chooses to say that equality is like Juggernath's Car, crushing everything equally flat, he is welcome to his little jest. But as I saw the white-robed pilgrims passing into the temple, there to partake of equality's sacrament, I knew that these outward things were but the symbols of an invisible worship, which may renew the face of the Indian people, and save ourselves from a threatening and dishonourable danger.

CHAPTER IX

The Divided Land

The plains of Eastern Bengal have been formed grain by grain from the washings of the dividing range of Asia brought down by melted snow on its way to the sea. Rivers that rise not very far apart on opposite sides of the Himalaya here unite at last after their thousand miles of circuit, and finish their course by broad and quiet streams, which lose the sacred names of Ganges and Brahmaputra. Some of the rivers also spring from the hill-country of Assam and the ranges where the pleasant station of Shillong offers a summer residence for the new Lieut.-Governor of Eastern Bengal as comfortably isolated from his capital at Dacca, as Simla or Darjeeling is from Calcutta. Thus the whole country is intersected with vast waterways and streams as slow and curling as the Ouse. Railways are built only in short sections, as it were to connect the rivers, and continuous roads must be very few. Everything goes by water, and the only trouble is that the rivers sometimes change

ON THE BRAHMAPUTRA. [*Face p.* 160.

their course, owing to an earthquake or other natural caprice. Their channels, too, are continually silting up, so that the course of the steamers upon their broad surface is always a little dubious, and, in spite of its slip of railway, the new capital of Dacca is even now being cut off from the world.

But for the square-sailed junks that the Indians use, and for the long black boats with pointed prow and stern pitched high in air, the rivers form a fine system of traffic ; and if the water takes a fancy for a new passage through miles of cultivated land the owners of the fields simply stake out their claims upon the surface, confident that in God's good time the river will withdraw, leaving the soil to future generations only the richer for its deposit. The whole country is, indeed, one of the richest parts of India, and the rivers pass between flat lands of mangoes and palm trees, jute or yellow rice. At times the size and stillness of the streams reminded me of the Oil Rivers of Southern Nigeria; but how different here are the firm and fruitful banks from those gloomy creeks and forests of the slime! When they are not busy in their sunny fields, the people are chiefly engaged in washing themselves, their babies, and their brazen vessels. Large numbers are also occupied in fishing, especially for a bony fish like a gigantic perch, which they drive into the nets with tame otters, captive in long leashes. Others live by converting the clay of the

banks into enormous potting jars that serve as stores for grain, *ghee* (clarified butter), and other food. The waterways also still carry a certain amount of the country's ancient industries—the gold and silver work, the bangles and ornaments cut from white conchs, and, above all, the hand-woven muslins for which Dacca was once celebrated throughout the world.

Since England killed the Indian cotton industry for the benefit of Lancashire, first by imposing duties on imports from India, and then by the present excise of 3½ per cent. upon Indian cottons manufactured for India itself, that ancient fame is chiefly found in museum specimens of past splendour, and in lingering words like the French "Indienne" for calico print. Even in Dacca the very finest muslin, such as the cows used to lick up with the grass, feeling no difference between it and gossamer, is no longer made. It has fallen out, partly owing to Manchester, partly because there are no longer enough rich Indians to buy it. But still the great caste of weavers have clung to their hand-looms as fondly as starving ryots cling to the land. There is hardly any difference of race in Bengal, but it so happens that nearly all the weavers are Mohammedans, descended from the old Hindu families who changed their religion to please their conquerors in the days when Dacca itself was an Islam capital of empire. In the last three years, the Swadeshi

movement, which officials have told Lord Morley is specially abhorent to Mohammedans, has enormously increased their industry. It has revived the ancient craft just as it was dying, and so I found the weavers in every town and village sitting on the floor, with legs stuck under the wooden loom, plying their thin-spun thread with hereditary skill—plying it sometimes under water, so that a woman's skin should hardly feel a stuff so fine and soft.

But one can never be sure how long a handicraft, no matter how beautiful, can hold its own against the mills. Even under Swadeshi the hand-looms will probably disappear, and the main produce of Eastern Bengal is no longer the most delicate fabric in the world, but the roughest. It is jute. It is not literally true that this dark and fibrous plant, something between a mallow and a flax, grows only in East Bengal, but it grows best there, and almost all that is used in the jute factories of Dundee is imported from this land of rivers. I believe it was through the Dundee shippers, not more than one generation ago, that jute first came to the Tay, but since then the prosperity of the jute wives on the Tay has varied with the prosperity of the peasant wives on the Ganges, and, unhappily, it has often varied inversely.

It is very doubtful whether the immense increase of the jute crop has been of real benefit to the peasant. The price is variable. In 1906, for

example, it went up to 14*s.* 8*d.* a maund (82 lbs.), and all the peasants laid down their land in jute, thus creating such a scarcity of rice that its price went up more than double—from an average of 5*s.* 4*d.* to 12*s.* a maund. In some districts rice rose to more than three times its normal price. Drought and flood combined to increase the scarcity, and a terrible famine ensued. Of course, it ought not to have been so. Economists would say that the sale of the jute and the export of the rice should bring in money with which the peasants could purchase food. The trouble was that reality refused to support the economic doctrine.

Jute, like flax, is a very exhausting crop, yet I have seen it actually planted on the same field with rice, and at the same time, because it grows quicker, and can be harvested while the rice is green and short. Nothing but a deluge can restore the soil so treated, and, at the best, jute wants more room and more labour. Then there are the middlemen to be considered—the British and Jewish middlemen who swarm at the centres of the jute trade, where the heavy wooden junks lie thick as a town upon the rivers. Lastly, there is the zemindar or landowner. He comes under the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, and his rent or tax to Government is fixed for ever. But within limits he can raise the rent on the cultivator, and it is in the nature of landlords to raise the rent. They are not rich

themselves, these zemindars. Throughout Bengal I heard lamentable stories of their genteel but increasing poverty that reminded me of the distressed Irish landlords of twenty years ago. Like the French, they have the custom of dividing the land equally among the children, and the Mohammedans endow their daughters in the division, which is very nice of them, but only hastens the family ruin. Unless a zemindar family launches out into other forms of labour beyond eating its rents, the number of hangers-on to small parcels of land increases, and their condition is often pitiable. All the more because, though the Settlement is permanent, the cesses or rates nominally levied for roads and District Boards, but really applied to all manner of other purposes, are continually increasing, and the curse of malaria, which saps the vitality and rots the brain, appears to be falling with peculiar virulence upon the zemindar class.

It is a question whether jute and the export of rice have benefited any one except the merchants and middlemen. Owing to the fall in jute, the peasants were growing quantities of rice again when I was there; but next year the rice might go down and jute up, and so they live in a gambler's uncertainty, and lay up no store of food, as the custom used to be, against the evil day. They sell everything as it grows, and with the money buy Rangoon rice which makes them sick. Many paternal officials,

though bred on our university economics, told me that to save the people they would even prohibit jute, tax exported rice, and abolish the cotton excise.

So far we may say the contest lies between Dundee and Eastern Bengal, but though I believe it to be a vital matter, that contest is tranquil and slow compared to the dramatic battle raging between Eastern Bengal and the British cities of Liverpool and Manchester. Liverpool stands for salt, Manchester for cotton, and Eastern Bengal has taken a solemn vow not to touch either their salt or their cotton till the burning wrong of Bengal is redressed. By the burning wrong they mean the Partition of the Bengali people into two separate and unconnected governments, Bengal proper to contain 18,000,000 of the race, and Eastern Bengal to contain 25,000,000. With the addition of the outlying and alien provinces of Behar, Chota Nagpur, and Orissa, Lord Curzon estimated the population of Bengal under the old capital of Calcutta at 54,000,000, of whom 9,000,000 would be Mohammedans; while, including the outlying and alien province of Assam, the population of "Eastern Bengal and Assam" with a new capital at Dacca would come to 31,000,000, of whom 18,000,000 would be Mohammedans. Throughout the whole of Bengal, whether East or West, it must be again remembered that the people are homogeneous, both Mohammedans and Hindus belonging to the Bengali

race, speaking the same language, living in amity side by side for generations past, and only divided in religion because some of their number, chiefly of the lower and less educated castes, had long ago embraced Islam for the most persuasive of reasons.*

Various schemes for sharing out the administrative burden of the vast province with its dependencies had been discussed for at least twelve years before, and there were obvious ways in which it could have been done—by creating the three contiguous districts of different race into a new western province with the capital at Patna, or by placing them under Chief Commissioners, while in either case Bengal should be raised to a Presidency under a Governor in Calcutta, enjoying the same privileges as Madras and Bombay. By the Charter of 1833 we promised a Governorship for Fort William (Calcutta), and the promise was renewed by Lord Dalhousie in 1853. It is hard in England to understand the difference that Indians feel between a Lieutenant-Governor trained in Anglo-Indian routine and a Governor appointed from among the leading men of England, and coming to their country free from the narrowing routine of the Service and Anglo-Indian society. But a very short time in India shows what that difference means.

Far from carrying out these pledges or following

* See Introduction, p. 10 ff, and for the history of Eastern Bengal see Mr. Bradley Birt's "Romance of an Eastern Capital," *i.e.* Dacca.

a smaller scheme of devolution favoured by Mr. Brodrick (Lord Midleton), at that time Secretary of State for India, Lord Curzon determined to split the Bengali people roughly in half and give them two Lieutenant-Governors instead of one—with a view, of course, to "greater administrative efficiency"; for, as Mr. John Morley somewhere remarked, "the usual excuse of those who do evil to other people is that their object is to do them good." The first sign of Lord Curzon's purpose was Sir Herbert Risley's letter of December 3, 1903, announcing a Partition in the name of the Government of India. The scheme then proposed was instantly met by a storm of opposition throughout Bengal, among Mohammedans and Hindus alike, and to the credit of Anglo-Indians it must be said that the opposition of the Bengalis was supported by many of the officials and by the leading Anglo-Indian newspapers, though the worldly success of officials and newspapers largely depends on Government favour.

Always impatient of criticism, Lord Curzon hastened through Eastern Bengal, lecturing the Hindu leaders and trying to win over the Moslems. With the Moslems, by one means or another, he partially succeeded, but the opposition among the bulk of the Bengal population continued as determined as ever. Hundreds of indignation meetings were held; I believe about two thousand in all. Great petitions were presented; one with 70,000

signatures attached was sent to the Home Government. But it was all in vain. The English people paid no attention ; they were not sure where Bengal was ; most of them had never heard of it apart from tigers, and did not care what Partition meant. The Home Government perhaps had its own reasons for "letting Curzon down gently." The scheme was hustled through almost in secrecy, and almost avowedly against his better judgment, Mr. Brodrick gave his assent. The fatal "Government Resolution on the Partition of Bengal" was issued from Simla on July 19, 1905 ; it was followed by the Proclamation of September 1st, and a blow was given to the credit of our country and to her reputation for justice and popular government, from which it will take us long years of upright administration and reform to recover.*

On October 16th of the same year the Resolution took effect, and the Partition became what Mr. Morley in an unhappy moment called "a settled fact." The anniversary of that national wrong has now become the Ash Wednesday of India. On that day thousands and thousands of Indians rub dust or ashes on their foreheads ; at dawn they bathe in silence as at a sacred fast ; no meals are eaten ; the shops in cities and the village bazaars are shut ; women refuse to cook ; they lay aside their ornaments ; men bind each other's wrists with

* See Introduction, p. 12.

a yellow string as a sign that they will never forget the shame; and the whole day is passed in resentment, mourning, and the hunger of humiliation. In Calcutta vast meetings are held, and the errors of the Indian Government are exposed with eloquent patriotism. With each year the indignation of the protest has increased; the crowds have grown bigger, the ceremonial more widely spread, the fast more rigorous.

Such was the Partition of Bengal, prompted, as nearly all educated Indians believe, by Lord Curzon's personal dislike of the Bengali race, as shown also by his Convocation speech of the previous February, in which he brought against the whole people an indictment for mendacity.* The Partition marks the beginning of the "unrest" in its present form. I think some kind of unrest would have been developed within the next few years in any case. It arises from all manner of deep-lying causes—from the success of Asiatic Japanese in war against a great European power, from the general communication by railway, the visits of even high-caste Brahmans to Europe, the use of English as a common tongue, the increasing knowledge of our history and liberties, and the increasing study of our great Liberal thinkers and John Morley's works. Add to these things the growing alienation of the subject races, owing

* See Introduction, p. 7 ff.

to notorious cases of injustice in the law courts, ill-mannered arrogance on the part of certain Anglo-Indians, abusive incitements to violence by Anglo-Indian newspapers, and a system of espionage by the police and postal officials. It would be a wonder indeed if any people with a grain of self-respect left in them had remained unmoved. But beyond question it was the Partition that directly occasioned the present outbreaks of distrust and hostility. When their petitions remained unanswered, and their public meetings had no effect, when the Partition was carried out with despotic indifference to their feelings and interests, the Bengali people, and through them the vast majority of educated Indians, unwillingly became convinced that England no longer cared what happened to them or their country, provided they paid the revenue and kept quiet. It was a dangerous conviction to which they had been brought. England as a whole neither knew nor cared anything about it. She thought she had done enough when she had entrusted Lord Curzon and the Home Government with the duty of knowing and caring.

All advocates of the Partition, from Sir Harvey Adamson downwards, have continually sneered at the Bengali objection to having their country cut in half as "sentimental." * By "sentimental" I find

* Sir Harvey Adamson's speech at St. Andrew's Dinner in Calcutta, 1907.

that this sort of people always understand an emotion that does not bring in sixpence. For instance, if we love our country because of her reputation for justice and freedom, they call us hysterical sentimentalists; but if we love our country because trade follows the flag, they call us sound supporters of the Empire. In accordance with this despicable standard, we may say that the chief objection to the Partition is one of sentiment. It is none the less strong on that account. It is the same kind of sentiment as would set Scotland ablaze with indignation if an English Prime Minister drew a jagged line from Thurso to Dumfries, and announced that in future Scotland would consist of two separate provinces, with one government in Edinburgh and the other in Glasgow, and no connection between them. A Scotsman's chief objection might be described as "sentimental" by people of Sir Harvey Adamson's mind, but I think "unrest" would hardly be the word for what would follow.

Yet that is exactly what England has allowed to be done in Bengal. The root of the indignation is a sentiment—an emotion that does not bring in sixpence. It is the sentiment of a patriotic and progressive race cut in two by an action which they believe to have been arbitrary and suggested by pique. And just because it is a sentiment, no material advantage or convenience of administration can ever serve as compensation for the wrong.

But even if outraged national feeling could be set aside as a sentimental complaint, the other grievances are strong. Calcutta is justly claimed by all Bengalis for their own capital, as well as the capital of India. It is the centre of their culture and trade, of justice and government. It has the best Indian newspapers; it is the home of the best social intercourse; its University sets the standard of knowledge; its High Court is regarded with confidence by all Indians as a sure appeal against injustice. To be separated from Calcutta and compelled to look to poor, ruinous, decrepit old Dacca as their capital is for Bengalis an intellectual and material loss. Dacca was a good enough Mohammedan capital three centuries ago, but now it is difficult to get at; its river, as I said, is silting up; it has not a single newspaper worthy of the name; it has no University, no High Court, and its new Lieutenant-Governor lives for months together far away at Shillong, almost inaccessible in the hills. It is true that Government has bought a lot of land north of the town and has laid out foundations for residences and offices where future officials can enjoy themselves in comfort. The existence of those foundations is a common argument against reversing the Partition even among the many officials who recognized its error. But to the Bengalis it only makes the thing worse, for their wretched country will now have to pay for a double set of buildings, a double

set of high and low officials, and a double set of questionable police.

There are other points. No one but landlords feels much disturbed at the woes of landlords, who suck their livelihood off the land like ticks off a sheep. But even sheep-ticks have their feelings, and in Eastern Bengal the zemindars also have a certain use in the world, especially when hunger drives them to cultivate their land themselves. To the zemindars the Partition has been a loss and hardship, increasing their legal expenses, and reducing such amenity as life afforded them. Naturally, their sufferings are worst when the line of partition passes straight through their land and exposes their flanks to double lawyers' fees from right and left. An Englishman whose ancestral estate had been thus divided between the two provinces, told me his existence had been rendered almost intolerable. He had always been accustomed to go to Calcutta for business connected with the estate, and as he was a celebrated polo-player and took an intelligent interest in horse-racing, his business visits to the capital were both frequent and pleasing. But now for more than half his business he had to travel far away to dingy Dacca—no horse-racing; no polo renown! This was no imaginary or sentimental grievance like the indignation of a proud and ancient race split in two for the satisfaction of its rulers, and I felt sure that if only such a case could be brought home to the

sportsmanlike governors of our Empire, they would persuade Lord Morley to regard his "settled fact" in a more pliable spirit.

The Eastern Bengalis also object to being bound up with the backward province of Assam, whose people they regard as semi-barbarous, and for whose improvement they alone will now have to pay, whereas the cost was formerly shared by all India. "Are we to be Assamese for ever?" is the scornful question of even Mohammedan peasants when they meet the sort of man who knows the news. Equally significant was a small Assamese deputation which came to me in Calcutta, because they had heard I was a Liberal, and they supposed that a Liberal Government would listen to Liberal principles. Their petition was for help in removing the yoke which now binds them to Eastern Bengal, where the progressive and educated population are too clever for them by half!

But of all material grievances—of all grievances other than the central crime of cutting a nationality in half—I think the Eastern Bengalis most fear their threatened separation from the Calcutta High Court. It is true that the blow has not yet fallen, but it is almost certain to fall, and the Government has refused to give any pledge against it. When I consulted Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, upon this subject, he very kindly referred me to Sir Herbert Risley's answer

to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, which had from the first petitioned against the change.* In Sir Andrew Fraser's opinion, "Lord Curzon's Government there placed clearly on record their view that nothing less than a High Court could ever be established in the new province," but he appears to me to have misread the document. In the main sections of his reply, Sir Herbert Risley carefully guards the Government three times over from making any guarantee as to the future. He states it as the Government's opinion :—

> "That it is most unlikely that in the event of the existing judicial machinery being found inadequate for the service of the two provinces and of public opinion then demanding the establishment of a Chartered High Court, any tribunal occupying a position of less authority and influence would either be proposed by the Government of India or sanctioned by the Secretary of State."

But he refuses to bind the future Government either to maintain the present connection between Eastern Bengal and the Calcutta High Court, or to establish a new High Court at Dacca in its place. The fear of the Eastern Bengalis is that in place of a High Court, which is regarded throughout India as the embodiment of true British justice uncontaminated by Anglo-Indian prejudice and tradition, they may be put off with a Chief Court, in which

* Proceedings of the Home Department, Simla, October 2, 1905.

the judges have been trained under the distorting influence of that prejudice and tradition. It is hard for us, accustomed to regard all our Courts as fairly equal in the dispensation of justice, to realize what that difference implies to Indians. But it is exactly parallel to the difference they recognize between most Anglo-Indians and the Englishman straight from home.

CHAPTER X

Swadeshi and the Volunteers

The Partition led to Swadeshi. Of course, there was nothing new in an attempt to encourage Indian industries. For thirty years past the true friends of India, like Sir William Wedderburn, had been insisting that the solution of her economic miseries lay partly in diverting some portion of her agricultural population to the industrial work for which she used to be celebrated till England stamped on her manufactures and determined to use her only as a farm for raw material and a market for Lancashire. Artistic people had also attempted to realize the same object, for it did not require a politician's eye to perceive the immense superiority of Indian fabrics in point of beauty. But the true Swadeshi movement dates from the year of the Partition. I believe it was first suggested by Mr. Krishna Kumar Mitra in his paper *Sanjibani*, when he declared that India's one sure means of drawing England's attention to the Partition and other wrongs was the boycott of British goods. The movement, however,

did not become public till a great meeting held in Calcutta Town Hall on August 7, 1905, to protest against the Partition. A form of oath was then drawn up by Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, Principal of Ripon College, Editor of the *Bengali*, and probably the most prominent leader of the Congress party in Bengal, and the oath ran as follows :—

"I hereby pledge myself to abstain from the purchase of all English-made goods for at least a year from this date. So help me God."

Thus a movement which had been entirely economic for some twenty years suddenly became political, and the boycott was added to Swadeshi. The growth of the new phase was rapid. It spread like a gospel through both provinces of Bengal. Within a few months the reports of our Commissioners were full of it.

"The Swadeshi movement has contributed largely to the development of the cotton cloth industry in all the districts of this division," writes the Commissioner of Burdwan in Western Bengal (1906–7), "except Bankura, where the inclination of the people to use country-made things is not pronounced and consequently the sale of Manchester goods has not much decreased."

In the *Indian Trade Journal* (July 25, 1907), published by the Government, the Magistrate of Hooghly is quoted :—

"It appears that while formerly the weavers had to take advances from the middlemen, they are now very much

better off, and, if anything, the middlemen are sometimes indebted to them. . . . There cannot be any doubt that, on account of the Swadeshi movement, the weavers as a class, who are a stay-at-home people, have distinctly advanced. Fly-shuttle looms are being largely used, and the people are said to appreciate them."

In the Report on the Land Revenue Administration of the Lower Provinces (1906–7) we read—

"It is reported that on account of the demand for country-made cloths, weavers working with the fly-shuttle can make as much as Rs 20 (£1 6*s*. 8*d*.) a month" (about double the average earnings of the class) "and that the demand for their services is daily increasing . . . some prospect of improvement in their material condition is held out by the present Swadeshi movement, in so far as it may induce the younger generation to devote themselves to a technical rather than a literary profession."

In the "Report on the Administration of Eastern Bengal, 1905–6," we find that eleven factories had been added in the year to the seventy-one already existing, the foreign imports showed a decrease of 16 per cent., and "Liverpool" salt had declined by 6000 tons. It has been the same with "imported liquors," though apparently the great decrease in them does not mean a decline in drinking, but an increase in "country" or Swadeshi spirits. The Collector of Dacca, a strong opponent of Swadeshi, or at all events of the boycott, remarked in his Report for 1906–7—

"Even the public women of Dacca and Narainganj took the so-called Swadeshi vow and joined the general movement against the use of foreign articles. People formerly addicted to imported liquor took to country spirit." *

Such facts prove how widely the movement prevails among the common people. It is necessarily a woman's movement, because women wear most of the cotton and do most of the housekeeping. They are the thrifty sex, because they and the children are generally the first to suffer from want. If they sacrifice cheapness to political conviction, it shows the conviction is strong; and though now the coarse hand-woven *sari* or woman's garment of the greater part of India (at two to three shillings a pair) is almost as cheap as Manchester stuff, and much more durable, the sacrifice has been something. I will add only two further proofs of the movement's strength. In reviewing the English exports in cotton piece-goods for May, 1907, the *Times* remarked: "India took less by 42,492,500 yards;" † and sitting by her mother, a child of Eastern Bengal was heard to ask, "Mother, is this an English or a Swadeshi mosquito?" "Swadeshi," the mother answered. "Then I won't kill it," said the child.

Such was the movement which I had found

* See "Swadeshi-cum-Boycott," by Hemendra Prasad Ghose; *The Indian Review*, April, 1908.

† Quoted in the above article.

speeding up the eighty or ninety cotton mills in Bombay, because, work as they might, they could not keep pace with the demand from Bengal. It is true that English manufacturers were said to be adopting the simple device of stamping their Manchester stuff with the Swadeshi mark, but I did not discover how far their deceit was successful.

The movement was spreading to all kinds of merchandise besides cotton. In Calcutta they had started a Swadeshi match-factory, in Dacca soap-works and tanneries. In all Indian towns you will now find Swadeshi shops where you may buy native biscuits, cigarettes, scents, toys, woollens, boots, and all manner of things formerly imported. Nearly all the trade advertisements in Indian papers are now Swadeshi. The officials whom I consulted, from the Governor of Bombay and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal downwards, professed sympathy and admiration for the Swadeshi movement. It would be almost impossible for them to do anything else, considering the economic salvation it may bring to India if it is maintained. Their interest in this economic development is quite genuine, and I am told that, though under official management, the Swadeshi stalls from Eastern Bengal during the Calcutta Congress of 1906 were the success of the exhibition. But the officials are in a very difficult position. With all their love for India, they do not like to stand by and see British

trade ruined, neither does the word "boycott" delight the official mind.

The Indians themselves have made an attempt to separate Swadeshi from boycott, and again to separate the economic boycott from the political boycott. At the Calcutta Congress (December, 1906) two resolutions were adopted that were to have a critical influence on the stormy Congress in Surat a year later. They ran—

> "(1) Having regard to the fact that the people of this country have little or no voice in the administration and that their representations to the Government do not receive due consideration, this Congress is of opinion that the boycott movement inaugurated in Bengal by way of protest against the Partition of that province was and is legitimate.
>
> "(2) This Congress accords its most cordial support to the Swadeshi movement and calls upon the people of the country to labour for its success by making earnest and sustained efforts to promote the growth of indigenous industries and to stimulate the production of indigenous articles by giving them preference over imported commodities, even at some sacrifice."

The first resolution sanctioned the political boycott, and was passed after much controversy, and mainly to avoid an open rupture under the presidency of the veteran Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji; for, unless the resolution had been admitted, the Extremists would have left the Congress. The second resolution was for the encouragement of economic Swadeshi, and was accepted almost without question.

It appears very doubtful whether the Swadeshi movement could have been carried on without a boycott of foreign goods; and as to political boycott, the Swadeshi remained an impotent and æsthetic concern till the political movement gave it driving power. Swadeshi is now so strong that it would probably hold its own even if all political grievances were removed. But its true origin was political, and hitherto it has been impossible to separate it from its political motive—the protest against the Partition of Bengal.

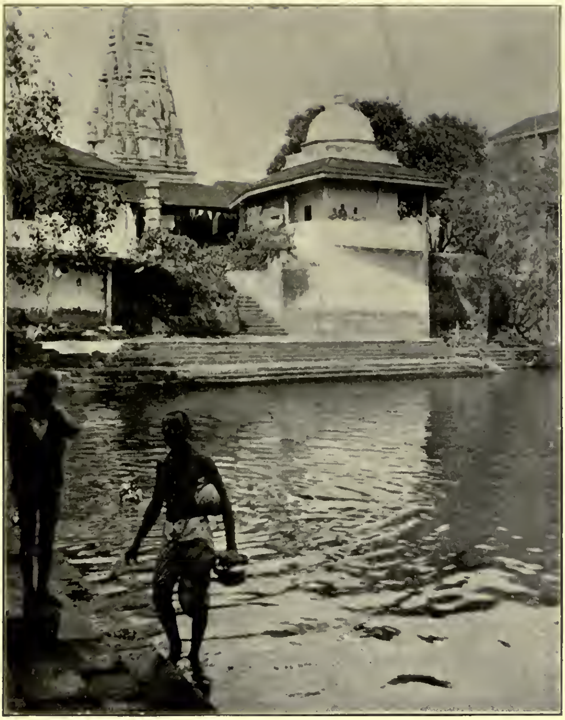
In any case, it was the political motive which spread the Swadeshi vow like a beacon light through Eastern Bengal. In towns and villages young men formed themselves into associations to preach Swadeshi and the boycott. Shops that continued the sale of foreign goods were surrounded by youths who implored customers for the sake of their country to depart without purchasing. Boys threw themselves prostrate in supplication before the customer's feet. This form of picketing was never violent, and I think it was not often prosecuted. It is true the officials regarded it with disfavour, and at Barisal Sir Bampfylde Fuller personally compelled the leading men of the town to withdraw a Swadeshi appeal they were issuing to the villages (November 16, 1905), and through the District Magistrate and Police he broke up a Provincial Conference which was being held in the same town (April 15, 1906).

But in some places the boycott took the form of destroying British goods, especially "Liverpool salt," and the goods were not always paid for first, though usually they were. In one case, four youths destroyed foreign sugar, valued at 1*s.* 2*d.*, and were sentenced to three and four months' imprisonment, with heavy fines. As is usual when political offences are savagely punished, the victims triumphed as heroes in the popular mind.

But when I was in Eastern Bengal, the time for that kind of boycott had passed. Even the remotest villages knew the principle of Swadeshi then, and the chief importance of the preaching movement among the young men was the stimulus it gave to the so-called "Volunteers." In the previous summer (1907), the phrase "National Volunteers" had roused alarm among sensationalists at home; but it was unknown in Eastern Bengal, and I believe it to have been the sole invention of a correspondent in Calcutta, who had at that time set himself to make the flesh of the British public creep. The Volunteers were originally organized in the 'eighties to act as stewards at the National Indian Congress, but under the enthusiasm of the Swadeshi and national movement, they have developed along many other lines. I met them first in Orissa, relieving the distress from famine and flood there, though Eastern Bengal was still their proper sphere. In Barisal, the centre of the

Bakerganj district, which was then the only part of India proclaimed under the Seditious Meetings Act, I first met one of the "captains," a mere boy, who explained to me the peculiar mixture of politics and philanthropy in their duties. In the Barisal Braja Mohun Institution, whose Principal, Mr. Aswini Kumar Dutt, is a notable Nationalist, the students had formed a society of Volunteers called "The Little Brothers of the Poor," for nursing among the villages, especially in the commonest and most deadly plagues of cholera and small-pox. The Oxford Brethren, who have a strong settlement in that unruly place and, I think, the only beautiful Anglican church in India, spoke of the movement as not unworthy of its famous name, though they themselves refused to take any part in the political controversies around them.

But the work of the Volunteers is not chiefly a matter of nursing and poor relief. In Calcutta and other cities they arrange public meetings and organize the course of the immense pilgrimages. At fairs and the great festivals when Hindu women come from all over the country to bathe in the sacred rivers, they act as their protectors against the rowdy class of Mohammedans, who regard women as their natural prey. When the Mohammedans, after the Partition, were induced to believe that the Government would connive at any violence on their part against the Hindu inhabitants, the



A TEMPLE TANK.

A TEMPLE OF SHIVA.

[*Face p.* 186.

Volunteers attempted a defence of their homes and temples. They were generally beaten, but they are doing their best to stiffen their courage and the fighting qualities we all admire. Ever since Macaulay's time the Anglo-Indians have wasted much of their lives in sneering at Indians, and especially at Bengalis, for effeminacy and unwarlike habit. By athletics, gymnastics, by football with bare feet, and lathi-play with the bamboo single-stick, the Volunteers are now seeking to wipe off the disgrace, and Anglo-Indians suspect sedition. They cannot have it both ways, and, for myself, I admire the Indian determination to obtain bodily strength. For, without being advocates of war at any price, we all know what moral force an argument gains when we feel that, if sweet reasonableness fails, we could, if we liked, knock the adversary down and break his bones!

Of course, some one has to pay for Swadeshi, and it is not always the British merchant who suffers for Lord Curzon's error. Late one night, as I sat on a river steamer after two crowded days in a strongly Swadeshi town, five or six dark forms were dimly seen to gather round me with gestures of secrecy and peril. In other countries I should have thought them assassins thirsting for blood, but they were only Hindu merchants with an interest in Manchester piece-goods. Of these they had a large store, I have forgotten how many thousand pounds'

worth, laid up in their warehouses; and, in consequence, they were shunned by their kind. Barbers would not shave them, milkmen would not bring them milk, friends would not come to their daughters' marriages, acquaintances would not say good-morning. Such treatment was distressing and inconvenient. Would I please use my influence with the Home Government, and set everything right again? They refused to throw in their lot with the Swadeshi movement; their goods were too valuable to be sacrificed, and they preferred to stand and die as martyrs in the cause of British commerce. I had no doubt their statement was true, but what hope could I hold out to them?—I, who had no influence with the Home Government, and, if I had been an Indian, would have done my utmost to dissuade my countrymen from buying any foreign goods at all till grievances had been redressed.

CHAPTER XI

The Nawab

Dacca still wears something of a Mohammedan air, for Akbar's long arm reached to Eastern Bengal, and the inheritors of his empire here built a fort, a palace, and a capital. Passing one day among its enclosed gardens, mouldering lengths of wall, and dying mosques, I had begun to imagine myself back in some Turkish town like Ochrida or Monastir, when I was suddenly recalled to the streams of Brahmaputra by the appearance of a large wooden cage under a tree in an open court. It was bigger than the cages in which Louis XI. swung his political opponents in the castles of Touraine. It would have held a bull as well as an eagle, and was firmly set upon a base of stone, daubed with vermillion, as is the Hindu way. Life in a cage has always seemed to me so curious a choice when this nutshell of a planet is itself so small, that I stopped to contemplate it, and, observing my interest, the Brahman who accompanied me began to knock with a stone upon a large wooden box, which occupied

one corner of the interior. The summons appeared to be recognized, like the call to a menagerie's wild beast at feeding time. There was a stir inside, a lid opened, and presently a human head emerged shaggy as John the Baptist's, with black hair.

It was the city anchorite, whose sleep or meditation we had rather rudely disturbed. But he took it in good part, as one accustomed to allow for grosser natures, and, raising himself deftly from his lair, he stood naked before us, contemplating this garish muddle of a world with shy and melancholy eyes. Human speech was distasteful to him, but he had come, he said, from a distant province, the name of which did not concern a mind set upon infinity. All his life now he meditated, not directly upon God, but upon the remembered words of his Guru, or spiritual master, which in time might lead him to the meditation upon God Himself. He was unwilling to say more, and, being in haste, I gave him six annas (sixpence) as an endowment of meditation, which appears to me far the most difficult achievement of the human mind, and he crept back into his box to continue it.

I was in haste, because I had an appointment with the Nawab Salimulla of Dacca, certainly the most influential personality in the city, and perhaps in the province. For the population of Eastern Bengal, though nearly all Bengali, is about three-fifths Mohammedan, and, owing to his father's

wealth, wisdom, and public munificence, the Nawab is regarded by the Mohammedans as their natural leader. It is an instance of mankind's touching belief in heredity, for the present Nawab is not specially conspicuous for those three claims to recognition. His munificence has been largely private, and, added to certain peculiarities on the part of his guardian, it has so much reduced his father's wealth, that he has been compelled to hand over the remainder to the Government Court of Wards, having publicly declared himself a "disqualified proprietor," incapable of managing his own affairs. This cannot, however, in itself imply any lack of wisdom, for since that public declaration the Government of India has reappointed him a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, as one peculiarly capable of managing the affairs of an Empire. And, indeed, with regard to the burning question of the Partition, he has shown wisdom's reasonable and open mind. When the Partition was first suggested, he was as much opposed to it as any Bengali could be, and I was told that, in his simple-hearted way, he described it as "beastly." But such prejudice was not proof against reason, and it began to dissolve under the influence of Lord Curzon's visit, and the speeches in which he promised that the Partition "would invest the Mohammedans of Eastern Bengal with a unity which they had not enjoyed since the days of the old Mussulman viceroys and kings."

Shortly after the Partition the Government of India advanced a loan to relieve the Nawab's private munificence from bankruptcy—a loan amounting to about £100,000, at what was, for India, a very low rate of interest. This benevolent action, combined with certain privileges granted to Mohammedans, was supposed by many Hindus to have encouraged the Nawab and his co-religionists in taking a still more favourable view of the Partition itself.

Not only so, but priestly mullahs went through the country preaching the revival of Islam, and proclaiming to the villagers that the British Government was on the Mohammedan side, that the Law Courts had been specially suspended for three months, and no penalty would be exacted for violence done to Hindus, or for the loot of Hindu shops, or the abduction of Hindu widows. A Red Pamphlet was everywhere circulated, maintaining the same wild doctrines. It was seen that a large proportion of Government posts were set aside for Mohammedans, and some were even kept vacant because there was no Mohammedan qualified to fill them. Sir Bampfylde Fuller said in jest that of his two wives (meaning the Moslem and Hindu sections of his province) the Mohammedan was the favourite. The jest was taken in earnest, and the Mussulmans genuinely believed that the British authorities were ready to forgive them all excesses.

Some two years after his departure from India Lord Curzon wrote to the *Times* that it was "a wicked falsehood" to say that by the Partition he intended to carve out a Mohammedan State, to drive a wedge between Mohammedan and Hindu, or to arouse racial feuds. Certainly no one would willingly accuse another of such desperate wickedness, but a statesman of better judgment might have foreseen that, not a racial, but a religious feud would probably be the result of the measure. What might have been expected followed. In Comilla, Jamalpur, and a few other places, rather serious riots occurred. A few lives were lost, temples were desecrated, images broken, shops plundered, and many Hindu widows carried off. Some of the towns were deserted, the Hindu population took refuge in any "pukka" house (*i.e.* house with brick or stone walls), women spent nights hidden in tanks, the crime known as "group-rape" increased, and throughout the country districts there reigned a general terror, which still prevailed at the time of my visit. Thus a new religious feud was established in Eastern Bengal, and when Mr. Morley said in the Commons that the disturbance was due to the refusal of Hindus to sell British goods to Mohammedans, it was a grotesque instance of the power that officials have of misleading their Chief.

The largest of the Nawab's palaces, looking over the river, is built in the French style of Louis

XIV., but is not so old, having been probably constructed by the present Nawab's rich and prudent father. Similarly, the large collection of knightly armour in the entrance hall, recalling the onsets of Cressy and Agincourt, do not suggest that the present owner's ancestors were engaged in those famous battles, as they would in an English millionaire's house. As a matter of fact, I believe the present Nawab's grandfather or great-grandfather came from peaceful Kashmir and established the family fortunes originally on carpets. Since his time, while the family fortunes have developed, the family taste has developed too, and the enormous vaulted room into which I was shown was stuffed with the expensive sweepings of European furniture shops. A huge armchair in cut glass especially fascinated my gaze, and in spite of my haste I had full time to be fascinated, because the Nawab was an hour and a half late for his appointment, having been detained at another palace where a wife dwelt to whom he was much attached—more attached, I I was told, than to any other.

So there was every excuse for his unpunctuality, and he made none, but swept into the room with a smile of benign complacency. He was a well-developed man of middle age—something of Falstaff's prominent personality, but preserving the childlike air of innocence and candour which nursemaids call "engaging." Round his large and serene

face, which smiled almost perpetually, hung a loose black fringe of beard. He was dressed in little purple slippers, thin pyjamas of white silk, a vest of exquisitely fine Dacca muslin "sprigged" (as they say in the china trade) with delicate rosebuds, a copious turban of the same, and a long purple coat or cloak of flowered brocade, with a white border embroidered with passion flowers.

"My own design!" he exclaimed with justifiable pride, as soon as the formal greetings were over, holding up the stuff for my inspection and slowly turning round that I might enjoy its full effect.

I soon discovered that though his mind was much occupied with Imperial politics, he retained a human interest in home life and the domestic arts. Like the elder Dumas, he was particularly proud of his skill in cooking, and he told me of many wonderful dishes he could make.

"You should taste my nougat!" he cried, and leaning forward like a diplomast with a State secret, he added, "Only this morning I composed a new almond toffee!"

I was not surprised that, with these natural gifts only waiting to be recognized, he was keenly alive to a lack of sympathy in his family circle.

"My wife," (he used the singular, and sighed)—"you have no idea what difficulty I have in getting my wife to try a new dish. With her it is always mutton, mutton, mutton! She has been brought

up on mutton, and Indian women have so little enterprise. She will not try my dishes."

"Let us go hence, my songs; she will not hear," I quoted in sympathy, and he sighed again.

"Our Indian women are very backward," he went on. "Now, there is my retired groom, my livery man—what a woman his English wife is! How finished! What pleasantness! How much nicer a home she makes for him than I can ever get! I will show you the difference."

He called an attendant who had been keeping his eye on me from behind a glass door, and presently the attendant returned with heavy gold ornaments—bracelets, anklets, and necklaces—thickly sprinkled with small turquoises and pearls.

"I gave these jewels as presents to my wife," he said. "They are my own design too. I bought the pearls cheap when the plague was very bad here, and people were glad to sell everything."

I commended this one evidence of ancestral thrift.

"Then I took the pearls and turquoises and gold to Paris," he went on, "and drew out a design for the Parisian jewellers to follow. You see the result. What grace! What finish! You cannot get finish in the East. It is the same with our women. They are backward; they have no finish."

By a mere slip of the tongue I said I greatly

admired what I had seen of Hindu ladies, and added something about seclusion and purdah.

"Hindu ladies!" he cried indignantly. "They don't understand what purdah is. They might just as well live shamelessly in public. It is only Mohammedan ladies who practise strict purdah, and seclude themselves with absolute delicacy and refinement."

I assured him I had supposed no less, and his aspect cleared again. Resuming his lightsome smile, he continued—

"For myself I am singularly happy. I suppose even the Emperor can hardly be happier than I am?"

He said this in a tentative way, as though appealing to my personal acquaintanceship with King Edward. But as I could offer no opinion upon the Emperor's happiness, he went on—

"Every morning I feel like a bird. I wake after my sweet sleep, when the birds are waking too. I like to hear them sing, because I know that I am as happy as they can be. I have my troubles of course. I never can induce the gardeners to water my flowers at the right time. They will water them in the evening when the cool night is coming. I tell them they ought to water in the morning, as a protection against the hot days. They promise to obey, and next evening out they go again with their water-pots, as their fathers did

before them. There is no science in the East, no progress, no reason."

For an instant this lamentable truth depressed him, but he revived at the recollection of his own assured happiness.

"I trust entirely to God," he said. "I leave everything in His hands, and all goes well. He has always helped me very much. Hitherto He has helped me so that I hardly ever have to work. He has never let me work very much, and I trust everything to His care. I think that is why I am so happy, and feel like a bird in the morning after my sweet sleep."

I suggested that an easy conscience conduces to sleep and happiness, and he agreed it was so.

He then turned to more general subjects, and, like Lord Curzon, he much regretted the Bengali tendency to lying. It was corrupting even the Mohammedans, and nearly all Indian children were brought up in deception, usually to escape punishment or to give pleasure. I remarked that even in Europe these motives sometimes lead to deceit, but he had formed an ideal of English education, such as the Greeks formed of Persian. English boys, he said, were taught to ride, shoot, and tell the truth. It was a fine testimony from a man of education so different from our own.

Of Hindus in general, and of Mohammedans who had lost their faith, he expressed deep distrust,

pointing the moral from the fate of a near relation, who, through associating with women and Hindus, was now no better than one of the lost. This grieved me very much, for I had heard that relation highly spoken of in the town, and he had made me various offers of kindness. But the Nawab was inflexible in virtue.

"You must fear God," he said, becoming for a moment almost grave. "There is no good in praying to God, for He needs nothing that we could give Him in exchange for His gifts. But we know that He is pleased with truth, and we must tell it."

Then we discussed the Partition, and as I rose to go he exclaimed, "Here in Dacca I have 10,000 men ready to die for me if I raise my little finger. That is how I keep the peace."

How far he expected to please God by that statement I do not know. But probably he was quite sincere, for it is impossible to exhaust or caricature the illusions of mankind.

One would like to discover the causes of a certain "quality" (as country people say of gentlefolk) that appears common to nearly all Mohammedans. I have felt it almost equally in Constantinople and other parts of Turkey, in Asia Minor and Crete, in Morocco, and on the West African coast, in Madras, in the North-West Frontier Province, and even in the rather petted luxury of the Mohammedan College at Aligarh. In all these

places one finds a similar pleasing gravity of manner, courteous address, and an impression of straightforward dealing, which, perhaps, would be more trustworthy if the Sultan were not a Mohammedan. This gentlemanly manner may exist merely as the heritage of a conquering religion; for in all these countries, as in Eastern Bengal, the Mohammedans have come and stayed as conquerors, and it is easy to acquire fine and aristocratic manners when you carry a sword and the other man does not. But at the back of external behaviour there is a queer mixture of simplicity and shrewdness more difficult to account for. It may arise naturally in a mind reared upon a broad and unquestioned basis of belief, free alike from the confusion of mythologies and the distracting details of useful knowledge. There is a well-known letter, written to a friend of Nineveh Layard by a Turkish Cadi, that exactly expresses the finer side of Mohammedan ignorance. For that reason I quote it in the note below,* and

* "My illustrious Friend, and Joy of my Liver! The thing you ask of me is both difficult and useless. Although I have passed all my days in this place, I have neither counted the houses nor inquired into the number of the inhabitants; and as to what one person loads on his mules and the other stows away in the bottom of his ship, that is no business of mine. But, above all, as to the previous history of this city, God only knows the amount of dirt and confusion that the infidels may have eaten before the coming of the sword of Islam. It were unprofitable for us to inquire.

"Oh, my soul! Oh, my lamb! seek not after the things which concern thee not. Thou camest unto us and we welcomed thee: go in peace.

"Of a truth, thou hast spoken many words; and there is no harm

The Temple of Sikhs.

A Mohammedan Mosque.

[Face p. 200.

when to this disregard of unessential phenomena in earth and sky is added an indifference to the controversies, bare facts, and mechanical actions upon which most of us spend our lives, we may look for a certain simplicity tempered by shrewdness. That even in the Nawab, in spite of his Government loan and boasted powers of design, cookery, and the control of men, I should still have been conscious of both those qualities combined, is a remarkable testimonial to the influence of Islam.

done, for the speaker is one and the listener is another. After the fashion of thy people thou hast wandered from one place to another. until thou art happy and content in none. We (praise be to God) were born here, and never desire to quit it. Is it possible then that the idea of a general intercourse between mankind should make any impression on our understanding ? God forbid !

"Listen, O my son ! There is no wisdom equal to the belief in God. He created the world, and shall we liken ourselves unto Him in seeking to penetrate into the mysteries of His creation ? Shall we say, behold this star spinneth round that star, and this other star with a tail goes and comes in so many years ? Let it go. He from whose hand it came will guide and direct it.

"But thou wilt say to me, Stand aside, O man, for I am more learned than thou art, and have seen more things. If thou thinkest thou art in this respect better than I am, thou art welcome. I praise God that I seek not that which I require not. Thou art learned in the things I care not for ; and as for that which thou hast seen, I defile it. Will much knowledge create thee a double belly, or wilt thou seek Paradise with thine eyes ?

"Oh, my friend, if thou wilt be happy, say there is no God but God ! Do not evil and then wilt thou fear neither man nor death ; for surely thine hour will come.

"The meek in spirit,
"Imaum Ali Zade."

Layard's "Nineveh and Babylon," p. 663.

Owing to these pleasant qualities, so attractive to Englishmen sprung like myself from the public-school, country-house, and villa classes, I have almost invariably found English officers and officials on the side of the Mohammedans where there is any rivalry of race or religion at all. And in Eastern Bengal this national inclination is now encouraged by the Government's open resolve to retain the Mohammedan support of the Partition by any means in its power. It was against the Hindus only that all the petty persecution of officialdom was directed. It was they who were excluded from Government posts ; it was Hindu schools from which Government patronage was withdrawn. When Mohammedans rioted, the punitive police ransacked Hindu houses, and companies of little Gurkhas were quartered on Hindu populations. It was the Hindus who in one place were forbidden to sit on the river bank. Of course, the plea was that only the Hindus were opposed to the Government's policy of dividing them from the rest of their race, so that they alone needed suppression. And certainly, after what I had seen in the previous four or five years in Macedonia, Central Africa, Russia, and the Caucasus, this kind of persecution might well appear ludicrously small. But it was the beginning of a dangerous road, to which one could not see the end, and the knowledge that our own country was taking that road aggravated the sense of wrong.

It was the same with espionage. Personally I enjoyed being followed by spies wherever I went. I enjoyed it much more than the spies themselves. It was a pleasure to watch the open-hearted stupidity which never left me in doubt as to their purpose, or to look them tranquilly in the face and see their eyes drop in honourable shame. It was a joyful moment when at Serajganj I turned in wrath upon a man who had been following me all day long in the melodramatic disguise of a black shawl and an umbrella, and watched the poor hired worm grovel away, murmuring tearful appeals about superior orders. In that case I was angry because I was visiting the schools—the same over which Sir Bampfylde Fuller resigned—and it seemed to me unfit that the schoolboys should see our Government's habit of espionage thus illustrated before their faces. But at another place where I arrived in the cold of half-past three in the morning, and found that the telegram to prepare for my arrival had been detained, there was no alloy in the pleasure with which I seized upon the spy detailed to dog me, and compelled him to procure a cart, conduct me to the house where he knew I ought to have been expected, and knock up the sleeping servants to receive me.

When I first landed in Bombay, it appeared to me a little undignified that representatives of the British Government should set police spies to question a Member of Parliament's chauffeur every

morning and evening where he was going or had been, and with whom he had conversed. Of course it made no difference to the Member of Parliament, any more than the delightful spies in Eastern Bengal made any difference to me. But what was a joke to us may be anything but a joke to native Indians who are compelled to live permanently under a system of official surveillance which reads their private letters, detains their telegrams, and hires men to watch their actions. Far worse than the mere annoyance involved is the indignant contempt which our Government thus stores up against itself. Every now and then by such means it may discover the trail of some seditious movement. But the discovery of all the sedition in India would not be worth the loss of reputation to which we expose ourselves by resorting to methods that would exclude a man from any club in our country.

There is something about espionage that stirs indignation more deeply than anything else in the world. But I do not wish to part from that land of great rivers with a mere feeling of bitterness. When I recall the quiet circuit of streams by which I slowly passed from Khulna to Barisal, and on to Dacca; and from Dacca through Mymensingh and Jamalpur and Serajganj and Goalundo, where the Ganges and Brahmaputra are joined, to Faridpur, where trains run back to Calcutta,—I lose the sense of bitterness, though there was plenty in the country. I think

only of the fertile land basking under an uninterrupted sky, or of bright crowds of men in yellow, red, and white standing upon the river bank and shouting their "Bande Mataram" against the sunrise; or of long torchlight processions that conducted some leader of the nation home in his carriage through the blue night; or of little groups of schoolboys who had stayed on the platform till the cold of morning to cheer a passing train, delighted even to shiver for their country. "I fear we shall never meet again on life's rough sea," said a student at one place, being naturally proud of such beautiful English; and, certainly, one cannot hope to visit the Brahmaputra every week-end. But even from a good month's distance, as London is, it seems impossible to believe that one petulant error can for all time produce division and rancorous hatred in so excellent a country and among a people so devoted to the same causes of freedom and nationality that we so much admire.

CHAPTER XII

Three Bengalis and the Papers

All know the crowded Kalighat on the muddy little branch of the Ganges south of Calcutta. The little temple of the mother Kali stands close by, where Hindus keep up an animal sacrifice something similar to the classic and ancient Jewish rites. Many Europeans enjoy seeing the heads of the wretched little goats sliced off by a priest's sword while the animals are still dripping from a plunge in the sacred tanks. Many, like myself, have gone with the crowding pilgrims on festival Sundays or weekday evenings and watched the people bathing in the turbid water, and the Brahmans seated in the open portico reading aloud the wanderings of Rama and breaking into song at the impassioned parts. Or we have stood at the narrow entrance till the door of the inmost shrine should open, allowing a glimpse of the goddess herself, the Bengal Mother, symbolic of the strange Force in nature, always moving irresistibly on its way with life and death, blessing and damnation in its hands. Blue-black she is, with

THE KALIGHAT.

PILGRIMS TO KALI.

[*Face p.* 206.

three staring, scarlet eyes, one of them in her forehead. In her four arms she holds the signs of happiness and of destruction. One foot is planted on the body of a man, and from her mouth a golden tongue protrudes. Her worshippers tell that in her career of destruction through the universe, she was only stayed by the intervention of her husband Shiva, who in the semblance of a dead man flung himself before her feet to be trampled on. She is represented pausing in horror at the discovery. To put out the tongue is the common gesture of shame or horror among the Indian women, and if it seems a peculiar expression of those emotions, watch an English country servant whenever she drops a trayful of your best china on a stony floor, and she will almost invariably do the same.

How far this hideous collection of symbols is itself worshipped is the problem of all imagery and symbolic art. A priest of Kali, who had himself received a religious education in one of our missionary colleges, told me that in the hour of prayer he found that the image helped him to concentrate his thoughts upon that idea of universal force. He admitted that some unlearned worshippers obscurely connect a supernatural power with the actual image as it stands; and the great desire of many to draw near, and even to touch the representation of the god, seems to prove it, as one may see in all temples and churches where symbolism prevails. It is rather

strange that Indians, with their beautiful sense of colour and design, should content themselves with unusually hideous gods; for, grand as the figure of Buddha in contemplation is, it stands alone in its beauty, and now no longer appears in Hindu forms of worship. Yet the adoration of the Mother Kali, even at the blood-stained Kalighat, does not appear to be more horrible or debasing than the service of other gods. In divine worship, devotion has never corresponded to external beauty; and as to the blood sacrifice, that custom has been too universal, and is still too recent even in the highest forms of religion, to excite horror or disgust, except in the tourists who go to enjoy the spectacle. It seemed to me that the Kali worship did not suggest the violence of bloodshed, still less the common lust that visitors are told to associate with it, but rather a certain heat or fervency that pervades and sometimes obscures the Bengali mind, taking the form in some of exaltation, in others of oratory, and now and then of fluid speech.

All know this crowded Kalighat. But turn northward again; pass the Lieutenant-Governor's beautiful Residency at Belvedere; pass the race-course and polo-grounds, the old Fort where the Commander-in-Chief has his headquarters, and the Strand where steamers smoke on the river and the English drive slowly up and down in the evening; pass the white Government House where the

Viceroy lives in winter, and the dull streets of English shops where they sell things that are not quite good enough for England or quite bad enough for the Colonies; enter the squalid chaos of the Indian city, so ordinary and colourless compared to Bombay or Madras; pass through mile after mile of crowded bazaars, and teeming slums, and factories jumbled up with temples;—till at last the buildings begin, as it were, to shake themselves loose, green reappears, and when you come upon the river on your left, it looks almost clean and holy; palms and other trees grow on the banks, and there is a sense of escape in the air. There you will find another temple of Kali, spacious, silent, and a home of peace.

Under a great banyan tree in this temple's garden a religious teacher sat for years, and gathered many disciples round him before his death in 1886. He was known as Ramakrishna, but he had the names of Deva and Paramahamsa as well, and there he sat expounding the things of the spirit, like other Hindu teachers. But there seems to have been an intensity of conviction about him that attracted unusual disciples. Among them was a young Bengali named Norendra Nath Datta, who took the more holy name of Vivekananda, and spread his master's teaching as far as Oxford and Chicago—cities so seldom associated together in spiritual things. He too has gone from this world now—

he went in 1902, at the age of forty—but has left a school, a kind of religion or Church, that proclaims a spiritual Hinduism to all mankind without limitation of race or nation. Its proper name is the Ramakrishna Society, but the members are generally called Vedantists, because of their belief in the Vedas as the inspired guides of man. They abjure images and sacrifice, except of flowers and fruits, which I have seen them offer as symbols of thanksgiving and praise to the spirituality of the universe in their bare but sufficient little temple up a flight of steps. By their belief in the Vedas they approach the Arya Samaj. But their more modern advancement and universality bring them nearer the Brahmo Samaj, or cultivated Unitarians of Hinduism, whose freedom of life and social intercourse for men and women alike gives a peculiar charm to Indian society in Calcutta. Small in number themselves, they stand between these two main bodies of religious reformers—believers in the Hindu scriptures, but preachers of a universal religion; free from the caste restrictions of travel, marriage, and food, but strongly national in their devotion to the country. Just across the river, from that peaceful temple of Kali where their founder sat, they have their little monastery for the training of about thirty Brothers, who go out from their pleasant garden to teach all the world, and to save their own Indian people in days of plague and famine.

Moti Lal Ghose

It was in a small circle of these Vedantists that I first met Moti Lal Ghose, one of the most peculiar figures of Calcutta life. He is not a Vedantist himself, being a special worshipper of Vishnu. Indeed, he follows the Bengali saint Chaitanya, or, as he prefers to call him, the Lord GAURANGA, who proclaimed a purified and emotional form of Hinduism about the time of Luther, and still has disciples, especially among outcasts and downtrodden people, because he promised the love of God to all without charity's limitations to the thrifty and deserving. But devoted Vaishnava as Moti Lal is, one would think his guiding faith was a sort of clanship or family affection. They say a hundred relations make their home in his rambling household among the little streets of the Bagh Bazar, and that number would be distracting enough for the most placid of mankind, which Moti Lal is not. Almost every one seems to be Moti Lal's relation, and as, like many Hindus, he speaks of his cousins as brothers, and his nephews as sons, the bonds of kinship seem as close as they are wide. But the affection of his heart is reserved for his real born brother, Shishir Kumar, who now has waved adieu to this carnal world and lives in religious seclusion at Baidianath, a far-famed shrine of Central Bengal, communing with spirits whose visitations among men he chronicles in the *Hindu Spiritual Magazine.*

Both the brothers were brought up in the district

of Jessore, and they made their mother's village famous by taking its name of Amrita Bazar for the title of their paper, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*—*Amrita News*, as we should say. It so happens that the word "Amrita" in Bengali means both "nectar" and "poison," and no name could have been invented to express the character of their paper more exactly, for it can be sweet or venomous at pleasure, and is usually both. Its quickness and satiric power have won it a unique place among Indian newspapers. It has also a good service of news, and as for enterprise, when Lord Lytton passed his Vernacular Press Act in the 'seventies, while Sir Ashley Eden was Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, the *Amrita* changed its language from the vernacular Bengali to the alien English in its very next issue. Such a transformation would have seemed impossible, if I had not seen the compositors in Madras setting up my "copy" with hardly a mistake, though they did not understand a word of English, and only guessed our letters by sight.

Moti Lal is an oldish man now, as Bengalis go, but he stands thin and erect, his mass of grey hair surmounting a face in which pathos, humour, and subtlety are strongly mingled. It is difficult to class him among the Indian parties. He often runs off on side issues, such as his peculiar and personal indignation at the rational proposal to separate the large and extraneous province of Behar

from the Calcutta government, so as to relieve the pressure of work which was the nominal excuse for the Partition of Bengal. On most of the wider questions of policy he would take a fairly steady "Congress" line, with a tendency to the Left or Extremist position. But that tendency may be suddenly interrupted by some queer cross-current, such as a personal devotion to the Royal Family, because he was once introduced to the Prince of Wales, and kissed his feet with a veneration that might abash even Royalty's sense of Divine Right. By means of his paper he is undoubtedly a power among the party of nationality and reform, but the general belief that in the past he has exercised a certain influence even upon British officials is perhaps justified. At all events, when he asked me to remind the Lieutenant-Governor of a promise to restore the Road Cess to its proper purpose of sanitation, I noticed that the petition was received in a friendly spirit, and I was instructed to tell Moti Lal that the proposal had not been forgotten, but was already embodied in a Bill.

Sanitation is one of those side issues which he follows with peculiar zeal. Poverty and high prices, he says, are killing out the educated classes in Bengal. But worse than the disappearance of educated Bengalis, which many Anglo-Indians would regard as a mercy of Providence, is the general ravage of malaria, plague, and famine. The plague

is still new, famine has been unusually frequent and terrible in the last thirty years; but worse than either, in his opinion, is the malaria which rots the country away. Like many Indians he attributes the growth of the disease to the Government railways, which have blocked or diverted the natural drainage of the land. The theory sounds a little fantastic. To me it seems a far more serious matter that the irrigation, which is often so lucrative, both to the peasant and the Government, should be accompanied by increase of fever. But whatever evil may arise in India, from a cesspool to a famine, is put down to the Government, as always happens when the people have no control over its powers and no experience of every Government's limitations. "There is no need to talk about driving the English from India," cried Moti Lal to me once: "In twenty years they will be driven out by the stench of our rotting corpses!"

Humorous, sarcastic, vehement, probably a little peevish, a little uncertain and unstable in his dealings with men and things, Moti Lal moves as a strange and isolated figure in Indian life. He is ageing and rather feeble now; when I asked him if he was going to the Congress at Surat, he answered, "No, I cannot afford to die." But he went all the same. I suppose he might be called a Congress man, but it seems unlikely that any one ever thought of him as a possible President, or as

anything else except the bitter-sweet editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

Very different is the editor of the other leading Indian daily in Calcutta. Mr. Banerjea, whom every one calls Surendra Nath, is just the ideal of a leader in Congress, and Poona made him President in 1895, Ahmedabad in 1902. He appears to be about sixty now, and in the early 'seventies he was an assistant magistrate in the Indian Civil Service, from which he was dismissed for a casual neglect of duty that in the opinion of many English Civilians might have been suitably punished with a sharp reprimand. Like most highly educated people out of work, he took to teaching, lecturing, and journalism; became Principal of Ripon College for the training of Hindu boys, as he still is; was appointed editor of the *Bengalee* by the proprietors, who, I believe, are Indian physicians; and has for many years maintained it in its position as the most prominent Indian paper written in English.

From early days, when he was the first to originate tours of political instruction, his influence has been very powerful, and no one has opposed the partition of his country with greater vehemence and persistency. In politics he has shown himself the fighting man rather than the thinker, a better leader than guide. Such theory as he has professed holds him to the Moderate and Constitutional party, and till it comes to action he would

cordially accept the propositions of all reasonable and practical reformers. But his instincts might carry him further than his creed, and in a moment of crisis he would probably be found in the front almost out of sight of his party. No matter how strongly reason and expediency disapproved, he would be reluctant to hang back from any extreme position, or to leave a devoted band of defenders there alone. That appeared to mark him out as the best intermediary between the Extremists and the Centre ; for, while neither party would look to him for definite political guidance, both might be supposed to know that he was at heart their friend, and both could point to his past services in the Bengal Legislative Council, the University Senate, and the old Calcutta Corporation, before Lord Curzon destroyed it.

The same kind of divergence between reason and personality causes, I believe, an uncertain attitude towards other affairs of life. By education and habit he is Western in the things of society and religion, and probably would have remained so without scruple of conscience, but for the recent revolt against everything foreign. Among the Extremists there is a kind of conservative reaction towards Indian ways and Indian religion, prompted not so much by love of those early marriages and Hindu gods as by the determination to tolerate European things no more. Thus, you might find

an Indian graduate of Oxford worshipping Kali for the same reason as makes him buy Swadeshi cotton, or pledging his infant daughter in marriage for fear she should grow up like an English lady. From patriotism of this sort Surendra Nath would not like to stand aloof, and, even if his judgment hesitated, an impetuous nature would perhaps bear him on, especially if he could thus assist his associates of the moment.

But his real function in life is as an orator, and his eminence has been won by an extraordinary power of speaking. I do not know how far his speeches in his own tongue might be effective, but he served his political apprenticeship at a time when oratory was tested by a knowledge of English, and I think he always speaks by choice in our language. Certainly, his command over it is very remarkable. Except for Mr. Gladstone, I have heard no speakers use the grand and rhetorical style of English with more assurance and success. I remember one afternoon there was a crowded meeting of many thousand students and other young men in the great College Square at Calcutta. There they stood, white-robed, bare-headed, as is the Bengali custom, and when the "Bande Mataram" had been sung, Surendra Nath rose. It was not a specially important speech. His object was only to sketch out the general programme of the approaching Congress, and to urge all parties to unite for the credit of their country, which was

being watched by jealous eyes ever ready to detect the first appearance of a flaw. That was all his theme, but he expounded it with a magnificence of phrase, and continuity of expression that held me in wonder. Sentence answered to sentence, period to period, thunder to thunder. There was no hesitation, no throwing back, no wandering for ideas or words. Out the great language rolled without a break and without a drop, each syllable in its exact place and order, each sentence following some cadence of its own, so inevitable that you could foretell the stress and rhythm of its rise and fall far in advance of the actual words, just as you can in Macaulay's declamations. It was oratory such as, I suppose, Cicero loved to practise, and Pitt, and Brougham—such oratory as few living Englishmen dare venture on for fear of drowning in the gulfs of bathos. But Surendra Nath loved it, as Cicero might. To him it was evidently the sincerest pleasure of life to listen to the beat of marching phrases, to advance from one to another with the assurance that not one of them would fail, and to lead them out in the martialled order of earth-shaking battalions moving shoulder to shoulder on their front. It was to him the fulfilment of function, and that way happiness lies. After him I spoke, and the meeting ended.

That evening I went to see a Bengali of still another type, but as distinctive of the present crisis in the country as the satirist or the orator. It had

been arranged, as I supposed, that I should meet some representatives of the young Nationalist party which form the staff of *Bande Mataram*, a daily paper written in English and maintaining Extremist views, but trying rather carefully to keep within the law. In that respect it differed from the farthing paper, *Sandhya* ("Evening"), written in Bengali of the roughest popular dialect, and deliberately going all lengths in virulence and abuse. That had been the policy of its founder and editor, Pundit Upadhya Brahmabandhab, who had died a few months before while under trial for sedition. One of the Brahmo Samaj by training, he had travelled much in Europe, had lectured in Cambridge, tried to become a Roman Catholic but failed (so rare a failure!) and on returning to Calcutta had startled the reformers of the Congress party by a light-hearted violence that must have ended in gaol, had not death anticipated imprisonment by release. In the same way *Bande Mataram* differed from the vernacular weekly *Yugantar* ("New Age" or "New Dispensation"), a revolutionary paper of a more gloomy and solemn type than the *Sandhya*, but about equally open to charges of sedition, to meet which it kept a staff of "prison editors" always ready for the next prosecution. The first of them to go to gaol was the youth Bupendra Nath Datta, a brother of the Swami Vivekananda, who followed Ramakrishna. In the early summer of 1908 it was prosecuted for the fifth time,

its printer was fined about £67, and sent to hard labour for twenty-three months, and after Lord Minto's new Press Act of June, 1908, it stopped regular circulation.

Mr. Arabindo Ghose was almost certainly not connected with the *Yugantar*, but nobody seriously denied his connection with the English-written *Bande Mataram*, though that paper also had a staff of volunteers for prison.* When I reached the house in a large square where the meeting was to have been held, I found it dark and apparently empty. A Hindu servant let me in, and after a time Mr. Arabindo Ghose himself appeared alone. He had not expected me, because the letter about my coming had been stopped, no doubt by the postal spies, as he said nearly all his letters were. He had no special reason to complain of that, nor did he complain; for the letters from one of the most respected public men in England to a member of the Viceroy's Council had recently been opened in Bombay, and English people who were friendly with Indians in Calcutta told me even their letters from home were tampered with in the same way.

He was a youngish man, I should think still under thirty. Intent dark eyes looked from his thin, clear-cut face with a gravity that seemed immovable, but the figure and bearing were those of

* For Bepin Chandra Pal's action during a prosecution of the *Bande Mataram*, see Introduction, p. 23.

an English graduate. His parents had been half-anglicized, and had never fully taught him his own language, so that he could not write Bengali correctly, or make a speech in the only tongue, as he said, that really went to the heart of the people. He had brought himself up amid poverty in Manchester, St. Paul's School in London, and at Cambridge. Though he passed the Indian Civil Service examinations within the first two or three, he failed to pass the riding test, and was rejected. Having served the Gaekwar of Baroda for a time in the education of that progressive State, he came to Calcutta, and was now the leader of the Nationalists, or young Extremists who regarded even Mr. Tilak as touched with the cautious moderation of the past. One of his brothers, a poet of some standing in English, was Professor of English Literature at the Presidency College in Calcutta University, and I found him there teaching the grammar and occasional beauties of Tennyson's "Princess," with extreme distaste for that sugary stuff. Another brother was supposed to belong to a different branch of the Extremists.

Arabindo's purpose, as he explained it to me, was the Irish policy of Sinn Fein—a universal Swadeshi, not limited to goods but including every phase of life. His Nationalists would let the Government go its way and take no notice of it at all. They hoped nothing from reforms; all the talk about Legislative

Councils and Indian members and the separation of Judicial and Executive functions was meaningless to them. They did not spend a thought upon it. In fact, the worse the Government was, the more repressive it became, and the less it inclined to reform, so much the better for the Nationalist cause. He regarded the Partition of Bengal as the greatest blessing that had ever happened to India. No other measure could have stirred national feeling so deeply or roused it so suddenly from the lethargy of previous years.

"Since 1830," he said, "each generation had reduced us more and more to the condition of sheep and fatted calves."

He lamented the long peace, leading to degeneracy and effeminate ways. Under it the ordinary people had sought only after prosperity and material comfort, while the thoughtful men spent their time in æsthetic circles, admiring Shelley and Swinburne, or imitating them. The more English a man was, the more he counted himself successful, and the life-blood of nationality had run thin. But all this torpor and smug contentment had been rudely interrupted by the disguised blessings of Lord Curzon's errors. Indignation had again created patriotism when apparently it was dead, and the new party's whole policy was aimed at carrying forward the work that Lord Curzon had so successfully begun for the revival of national character and spirit. For this purpose of

building up a race worthy of a great name they proposed to work on the three lines of a national education, independent of Government but including the methods of European science; a national industry, with boycott of all foreign goods except the few things that India could not produce; and the encouragement of private arbitration, in place of the law-courts, for the settlement of disputes.

But behind these simple means a deeper spirit was at work. Arabindo Ghose had already, I think, formed the project of developing out of the Congress, or in place of the Congress, a nationalist and democratic body that would prepare the country for self-government and, indeed, act within limits as a true Indian Parliament quite apart from the Anglo-Indian system. A few weeks later, a leading article on the subject, probably written by Arabindo himself, appeared in *Bande Mataram*—

"Let us try the experiment," it said, "of a self-governing popular assembly, so far as is consistent with the existence of an alien bureaucracy seeking to restrict our independent activities in every possible way. No growth is possible under perpetual tutelage. We must devise means for stimulating activities on the part of our people. This cannot be better done than by organizing a really representative assembly that in its annual or periodic sittings will decide on our course of action. It does not necessarily follow that such an assembly will come into collision with the powers that be. We have every right to organize ourselves independently. The agitators have so long been

taunted with absolute dependence on the bureaucracy that people cannot reasonably try to repress an assembly for the offence of carrying out their own precepts. . . . As they cannot see their way to giving us any real voice in the administration, even in a dim and distant future, we have no other course open to us. Let us relieve the bureaucratic administration of as much of its duties as we can by undertaking to govern ourselves in as many departments as possible." *

Courage, he rightly saw, was the first thing to maintain or to create in any people, especially in a subject people like the Bengalis, who had so long been taunted with cowardice by one master after another. The taunt of cowardice is like one of those prophecies that fulfil themselves. It implants the cowardice that it derides, and if you call a people timid they begin to shake. Ever since Macaulay wrote, the Anglo-Indians had been brought up by their schools and coaches to regard the Bengalis as the cowards of the world, and what was far worse, the educated Bengalis had been taught to regard themselves as the cowards of the world too, just because Macaulay had delighted himself one morning with a brilliant passage of rhetoric. †

* *Bande Mataram*, January 21, 1908.

† As Macaulay is no longer thought generally necessary to education, it may be worth while to recall a few sentences of his indictment of a whole people nearly twice as numerous as his own. The passage comes in his essay on Warren Hastings: "A war of Bengalis against Englishmen was like a war of sheep against wolves, of men against demons. . . The physical organization of the Bengali is feeble even

Necessity of Courage

Where the consciousness of timidity exists among a people, the first duty of a patriot is to remove it at all costs. So in the columns of his paper and in his rare speeches Arabindo Ghose was insisting especially on the necessity of courage :—

"Courage," said a leader in *Bande Mataram*, "is your principal asset. Heroism, says Emerson, feels and never reasons, and therefore is always right. If you are to work out the salvation of your country, you will have to do it with heroism. You have voluntarily cut yourselves off from outside help to develop strength from within. Darkness will hem you round, disappointments will cross your path, slander will pursue you from behind, but you are to depend on yourselves, and yourselves alone. You must press on and not allow yourselves to be dragged back by encumbrances in the name of unity. You have your only guide in the loftiness and spirituality that make their heaven in the thought of the wider light and purer happiness that you may bring to your country by long force of vision and

to effeminacy. He lives in a constant vapour bath. His pursuits are sedentary, his limbs delicate, his movements languid. During many ages he has been trampled upon by men of bolder and more hardy breeds. Courage, independence, veracity, are qualities to which his constitution and his situations are equally unfavourable. His mind bears a singular analogy to his body. It is weak even to helplessness, for purposes of manly resistance; but its suppleness and its tact move the children of sterner climates to admiration not unmingled with contempt. All those arts which are the natural defence of the weak are more familiar to this subtle race than to the Ionian of the time of Juvenal, or to the Jew of the dark ages. What the horns are to the buffalo, what the paw is to the tiger, what the sting is to the bee, what beauty, according to the old Greek song, is to woman, deceit is to the Bengali." And so on, for many more sentences of nicely balanced rhetoric.

endeavour. The rapturous contemplation of a new and better state for your country is your only hope. What great element is wanting in a life guided by such a hope?" *

There is a religious tone, a spiritual elevation, in such words very characteristic of Arabindo Ghose himself, and of all Bengali Nationalists, contrasted with the shrewd political judgment of Poona Extremists. In an age of supernatural religion Arabindo would have become what the irreligious mean by a fanatic. He was possessed by that concentrated vision, that limited and absorbing devotion. Like a horse in blinkers, he ran straight, regardless of everything except the narrow bit of road in front. But at the end of that road he saw a vision more inspiring and spiritual than any fanatic saw who rushed on death with Paradise in sight. Nationalism to him was far more than a political object or a means of material improvement. To him it was surrounded by a mist of glory, the halo that mediæval saints beheld gleaming around the head of martyrs. Grave with intensity, careless of fate or opinion, and one of the most silent men I have known, he was of the stuff that dreamers are made of, but dreamers who will act their dream, indifferent to the means. "Nationalism," he said, in a brief address delivered in Bombay, early in 1908—"Nationalism is a religion that comes from God":—

* *Bande Mataram*, January 22, 1908.

"Nationalism cannot die, because it is God who is working in Bengal. God cannot be killed, God cannot be sent to gaol. Have you got a real faith, or is it merely a political inspiration, a larger kind of selfishness? . . . You all know what Bengal used to be; you all know that the name of Bengali used to be a term of reproach among nations. What has happened? What has made the Bengali so different from his old self? One thing has happened, Bengal is learning to believe. Bengal was once drunk with the wine of European civilization, and with the purely intellectual teaching that it received from the West. It began to see all things, to judge all things, through the imperfect instrumentality of the intellect. When this was so, Bengal became a land of doubters and cynics. . . .

"The intellect, having nothing more to offer save despair, became quiescent, and when the intellect ceased to work, the heart of Bengal was open and ready to receive the voice of God whenever he should speak. When the message came at last, Bengal was ready to receive it, and she received it in a single moment. In a single moment the whole nation rose, the whole nation lifted itself out of despair, and it was by this sudden awakening from a dream that Bengal found the way of salvation, and declared to all India that eternal life, immortality, not lasting degradation, was our fate. . . .

"There came a time, after the first outbreak of triumphant hope, when all the material forces that could be brought to bear against Nationalism were gradually brought into play, and the question was asked of Bengal, 'Can you suffer? Can you survive?' The young men of Bengal were now called upon to suffer. They were called upon to bear the crown, not of victory, but of martyrdom. . . .

"It is not by any mere political programme, not by National Education alone, not by Swadeshi alone, not by

boycott, that this country can be saved. Swadeshi by itself might merely lead to a little more material prosperity, and you might forget the real thing you sought to do, in the glamour of wealth and in the desire to keep it safe. In other subject countries also there was material development. . . . When the hour of trial came, it was found that those nations which had been developing materially were not alive. . . . The forces of the country are other than visible forces. There is only one force, and for that force I am not necessary, you are not necessary, he is not necessary. Let us all be thrown aside as so much waste substance, the country will not suffer. God is doing everything. When He throws us away, He does so because we are no longer required. But He is immortal in the hearts of His people."

This fervour of nationality, which some would call fanaticism, certainly appears to differ in degree from the religious fervour with which we pray for the High Court of Parliament, "under our most religious and gracious King at this time assembled." But it would be no compliment to ourselves to doubt that at the back of both there is a unity of spirit.*

As to fanaticism of language and the violence that cannot keep outside the limits of sedition, I have seen violent and bloodthirsty passages translated from the *Yugantar*, the *Sandhya*, the *Hitaishi* ("Friend") of Barisal, and other vernacular papers.

* On May 3, 1908, Mr. Arabindo Ghose was arrested on the charge of being implicated in a conspiracy to provide rifles and dynamite for revolutionary purposes.

Such papers are fined, suppressed, have editors imprisoned, and under the new Press Act may have their type confiscated. But in none of them have I seen more deliberate attempts to stir up race hatred and incite to violence than in Anglo-Indian papers which suffer nothing. Take, for instance, this obvious instigation to indiscriminate manslaughter by the *Asian*, an Anglo-Indian weekly in Calcutta (May 9, 1908) :—

"Mr. Kingsford has a great opportunity, and we hope he is a fairly decent shot at short range. We recommend to his notice a Mauser pistol, with the nickel filed off the nose of the bullets, or a Colt's automatic, which carries a heavy soft bullet and is a hard-hitting and punishing weapon. We hope Mr. Kingsford will manage to secure a big 'bag,' and we envy him his opportunity. He will be more than justified in letting daylight into every strange native approaching his house or his person, and for his own sake we trust he will learn to shoot fairly straight without taking his weapon out of his coat pocket. It saves time and gives the elevation fairly correctly at any distance up to about ten or fifteen yards. We wish the one man who has shown that he has a correct view of the necessities of the situation the very best of luck."

That was written certainly at a time of great excitement, when an attempt had been made to assassinate the unpopular magistrate by a bomb, which killed two ladies, not only innocent, but related to one of those exceptional men whose sympathy with the people makes them justly beloved. But two

can play at the evil game of race hatred, and if the Indian press is violent, the tone of the Anglo-Indian press is almost invariably insolent and provocative. If "seditious" only means "likely to lead to violence," it is seditious too. There are fine exceptions, like the *Statesman*, the *Indian Daily News*, the *Empire*, and *Capital*, in Calcutta. Steadily supporting the official side, though with great freedom of criticism, as was shown in the case of Lord Curzon, the *Pioneer* of Allahabad maintains an honourable tradition. But as to Anglo-Indian papers like the *Englishman* of Calcutta and the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore, it must have been difficult for any thoughtful Indian who loved his country to read them during 1907 without cursing our race. Even the *Times of India*, the best paper in Bombay, greeted Mr. Keir Hardie's arrival in the city with a whole column of insults, not only to the Labour leader, but to the Indian people. Judging from the style, I thought the editor must have bribed some poor, half-educated Indian to do the thing for him ; but I heard afterwards, through one of the staff, that it was written by an Anglo-Indian, who was quite proud of his achievement. What cause he had for pride may be seen from a paragraph or two :—

"Mr. Keir Hardie's reception in Bombay was thoroughly in keeping with the rest of his experiences, and foolishly ebullient proceedings. All along the mountains have been

in labour; to the disappointment of excited and expectant Babudom the mighty throes have never produced more than here and there the proverbial mouse. Fifty Hindus, and a couple of Parsis: what a deputation from the wealthiest and most progressive commercial city of the East, what a characteristic greeting from the great heart of Indian labour to the personification of the political labourite spirit! Even this bathotic manifestation of the deplorable fact that the Oriental is almost entirely devoid of humour, as completely so as the labouring man and his chosen apostle, must needs miscarry. The fifty Hindu schoolboys and their two Parsi companions cannot find the god of their idolatory. Perchance he sleepeth, and cannot hear, or will not hear the piping yell of 'Bande Mataram'; at any rate look where they will in the compartments commonly occupied by their beloved agitators and demagogues, not a sign of this one is to be found. Topknots and draperies flying wildly to the winds, they race up and down chattering discordantly, baffled, desperate till at last, 'proh pudor,' they find him, not occupied in great meditations, not even spouting platitudes to the circumambient air, but prosaically strapping up his exiguous baggage, in a second-class compartment. 'Cophinus foenumque supellex.' A damper this and no mistake. Deputation from the dumb millions of India brimming over with enthusiasm and verbosity, subconsciously dominated by the traditional respect of the East for superior men, men to be looked up to, men on the summits, what to say to this essentially and markedly labelled second-class product! . . .

"Does it not occur to this man of the people, uncultured, illiterate, with at the best a stunted and perverted imagination, does it not occur to him, and the astuter ones who are making him their cat's-paw, that his enterprise is not only radically mischievous but overwhelmingly ridiculous? The

appeal from masses to masses, the slogan of gutter to gutter, cementing all the forces of inferiority, inefficiency, and serfdom, preludes war against all that is best and sanest and strongest in life. It is the voiced concentration of hatred, the hatred which the sick and the feeble and the bad by some strange law of antagonism cannot help cherishing against the healthy, the great and the good. On the one hand Aristocracy, the rule of the best, on the other Democracy, the rule of the mob, that 'bellua centiceps' representing again by the inexorable laws of nature what for the time being is the worst." *

And for the time being we certainly need not look, even from Democracy, for anything worse than that !

* *The Times of India*, October 26, 1907.

CHAPTER XIII

A Mahratta Shoe

It was roses, roses all the way—almost all the way during the forty-four hours in the train from Calcutta to Surat; and along the last part of our journey every platform was crowded with eager, smiling faces straining to catch sight of the future President of the Congress, and the long-trusted leaders who accompanied him. Dr. Rash Behari Ghose had been designated President by the Reception Committee at Surat, in spite of stormy opposition in favour of Mr. Tilak at a conference in Nagpur some two months earlier, and the subsequent proposal of Lajpat Rai by Mr. Tilak himself. He stood smiling at the carriage door, and answered with short speeches of thanks and encouragement. Or he walked the platform, and sat at station tea-tables while old men and youths hung long garlands of marigolds and jasmine round his neck, presented him with bright bouquets of flowers sparkling with "fairy rain," or sprinkled his coat and hands with Swadeshi scents from long silver bottles. Others

were with him—Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, the orator, Mr. Aswini Kumar Dutt, the leader of Barisal, members of the Chaudhuri family conspicuous in Calcutta, and many other well-known men who for years past had tried to carry on the work of constitutional reform in the face of Anglo-Indian ridicule, contempt, and hatred. A few younger men were there also, men of another party, who had abandoned appeals and petitions either to Anglo-Indian or British justice.

But the chief attention was centred on Dr. Ghose—Rash Behari, as people called him—a large, spectacled man of sixty-two, with strongly marked face and the general look and bearing of a European judge. From his student days at the Presidency College in Calcutta he had devoted himself to the law. He obtained the highest honours the University gives, he lectured in law, he produced the standard work on the "Law of Mortgage in India." I suppose he was exactly what people mean by a jurist. He prided himself also on a minute acquaintance with the whole range of the English classics, and it is almost impossible to read a page of his speeches without coming upon memories of some great passage in our literature. For he belonged to the time when education and capacity were estimated by a knowledge of English, and he had besides a genuine delight in the form and substance of words. But civil law was his life's

business, and in the knowledge of it he was called unrivalled.

He had taken to public politics late, only when the pressure of Government upon the growing national feeling appeared to him dangerous. But the weight of his knowledge, and his influence as one of the representative Indian members on the Viceroy's Legislative Council brought him quickly into notice, and in the previous December (1906) Calcutta had chosen him Chairman of the Reception Committee for the Congress, to which Dadadhai Naoroji had been brought from England as President to preserve the peace. Like all lawyers, he tended to moderation. He represented the spirit of the Congress as it had been established for more than twenty years—the spirit that had begun by hoping to win even Anglo-Indian consideration for its programme of reform, and, after abandoning that hope, still did not despair of influencing opinion in England, if only petitions and proposals could be heard.

His danger was the danger of all students—of all whose life is spent among writings that usually appeal to reason, and not among men, with whom reason plays so small a part. When it comes to action, such students are likely either to distrust themselves, to hesitate between opposite courses, in both of which they perceive advantages, and in hesitation finally to submit their wills to far inferior

intellects, out of a kind of awe towards men who have really done something. Or else they may show a childish impatience at disagreement, and suppose they have settled a controversy by ending it, like shutting a book with a bang. I thought the judicial hesitancy rather than impatience would be Dr. Ghose's temptation, but I was wrong, for he had, in fact, recently displayed a very decisive vigour in joining with Mr. Gokhale in denouncing the Seditious Meetings Bill on the Viceroy's Council.*

So amid acclamation they travelled to the Congress—the President-Elect and the other leaders.

On Christmas Day Surat was reached at last—a little old town on the west coast, between Baroda and Bombay, where early traders from England, France, Portugal, and Holland had built their "Factories," soon after Akbar's death. The crowd round the station was so tightly jammed that it was a long time before any one could leave the train.

* Towards the conclusion of his speech came the following characteristic sentences: "I oppose this Bill because it violates all the traditions which have up to this time guided the Government. I oppose this Bill because I wish to see the English Rule broadbased on the people's will, and not resting merely on the sword, whether Indian or British. And, lastly, I oppose this Bill because it will kill all political life in this country. . . . One word more. It is unfortunate that the 1st of November should have been fixed for this meeting. That day has always been associated in our minds with the gracious Proclamation of Queen Victoria. It will now be associated with the loss of one of our most cherished rights."

By reasoning and entreaty the youthful bands of "Volunteers" in khaki and forage caps at last cleared a space. A procession of carriages was formed and began to advance step by step through the shouting throngs of orange, crimson, and white-clad people. All the windows and tottering balconies of the beautiful but decrepit city that starves upon its past—even the galleries of Islam's crumbling minarets and the roofs of Hindu temples—were crammed with faces. Women peeped through shutters or stood shamelessly beside their children and brothers. Boys and girls thrust their heads through holes in the ruinous walls. At every few yards more garlands were offered, more bunches of flowers and sweet-smelling seeds. Thick fell the showers of rose-water sprayed from silver bottles. On every side rose the great cheer of "Bande Mataram!" From end to end the streets were hung with strings of pink and yellow paper flags, and here and there a triumphal arch uttered the universal welcome in Indian or English words. The great Pandal, or Pavilion, for the Congress, and the camp of tents pitched around it for the delegates from all India stood by the river side beyond the town itself. The distance was not much over two miles, and yet that journey took more than two hours to accomplish, so high ran the enthusiasm of joy.

But, behind the shouting and the triumph, one

heard the quiet voice that whispers of mortality. In the grey light of Christmas morning, as we came through some obscure junction in the train, we had heard that Mr. Allen, the collector of Dacca, had been shot on the platform at Goalundo in Eastern Bengal, and his life was despaired of. Mr. Allen did in the end recover, but at the time recovery was said to be impossible, and the news threw the same gloom and consternation over the Indian party of reform as struck the Irish Home Rulers on the news of the Phœnix Park murders. The month before there had been an attempt to wreck Sir Andrew Fraser's train as he was returning from Orissa; but this was the first political assassination, and every one knew that it would be answered by more repression, leading to further outrages and more repression again. Nothing worse could have befallen the party that still hoped for some sort of agreement in reform and conciliation with the country's far-off rulers, and the mute despondency that fell upon the leaders in the train showed the depth of their foreboding.

Even more ominous were the whispers of growing and violent division that reached us at Surat. The Extremist or Nationalist party had taken a new and decisive step in pitching a separate camp for themselves in a distant quarter of the town. For the last two days Mr. Tilak had been there, organizing and addressing them. The day before they

had held a full meeting of five hundred delegates, with Mr. Arabindo Ghose in the chair, and Mr. Tilak had spoken at length on the situation, especially denouncing the rumoured withdrawal of the Moderate party from the previous year's Calcutta resolutions upon Self-government, Swadeshi, Boycott, and National Education. Such a withdrawal was not to be endured. Rather than submit they would oppose the election of the President himself, even though the chair was waiting to receive him.

The resolutions were nowhere to be seen. Rumour said they had been altered past recognition. The heading of a Draft Constitution for the Congress was found. There it stood written that the ultimate goal of the Congress was "the attainment by India of self-government similar to that enjoyed by the other members of the British empire." That was Mr. Gokhale's work! How inferior to the Calcutta resolution that "the system of Government obtaining in the self-governing British Colonies should be extended to India"! "Other members of the British Empire" might mean Crown Colonies, Dependencies, anything! The Self-governing Colonies must be the model, and nothing else! That the heading of the draft implied nothing else,—that no one in his senses would apply the word "Self-government" to a Crown Colony, did not matter. Undermining ways were at work! The Calcutta resolutions were being tampered with!

the Moderates were capturing the Congress in the enemy's interest! It was not to be endured.

The whole air was full of suspicion. The mere choice of Surat for the Congress after Nagpur was abandoned—how suspicious that was! Surat, too close a neighbour to Bombay, the very stronghold of "Bombay Moderates"—Parsis, mere Parliamentarians, unredeemed by the fire of sacrifice, men who would make the best of both worlds, men who took titles from an alien Government! It was in Surat that Sir Pherozeshah Mehta had founded his fortunes. Now he dominated all the west coast, all the Presidency of Bombay, and here he was seen with Mr. Dinshaw Edulji Wacha, most statistical of Parsis, himself President of the Calcutta Congress in 1901. All the other obedient satellites were circling round him too, bent on conciliating a Government that answered conciliation with titles or contempt. Was a National Congress to be manipulated by mitred Parsis? It was all very well to plead Sir Pherozeshah's services to India in the past —in the days when, as a disciple of Ranade himself, he had stood almost alone against the bureaucracy, had displayed a courage equal to Mr. Gokhale's, an eloquence hardly second to Surendra Nath's, a power of sarcasm hardly rivalled by Moti Lal's; had been chosen President of the young Congress in 1890; had conquered for Indians the control of the Bombay Corporation; had converted his city into a model

of local government; had swept away her slums and purged her administration. To the suspicious Nationalist these things were nothing now. They belonged to the past, to the scrap-heaps of dead reputations. The crisis called for other arms, other methods. It was no longer a battle of slums and water, no longer a thing of appeals for sympathy and dear old Lord Ripon's reforms. Even Sir Pherozeshah's address at the Bombay Congress only three years before was now suspect. He was chairman of the Reception Committee, and one remembered the passage which ran:—

"My steadfast loyalty is founded upon the rock of hope and patience. Seeking the will of Providence, like Oliver Cromwell, in dispensations rather than revelations, seeing God's will, like him, in the fulfilment of events, I accept British rule, as Ranade did, as a dispensation so wonderful—a little island set at one end of the world establishing itself in a far continent as different as different could be—that it would be folly not to accept it as a declaration of God's will. But, as I have often said, when, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, this country was assigned to the care of England: the choice was offered to England as to Israel of old: 'Behold I have placed before you a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye will obey the commandments of the Lord your God; a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments, but go after other gods, whom ye have not known.' We cordially confess that, in the main, England has chosen wisely and well. . . . But the acceptance and announcement of a policy of righteousness is one thing, its application is another."

To the suspicious Nationalist the time for such language was three years past. Such compliments, such protests, all belonged to the age of innocence, before the Partition of Bengal proved the real character of England's domination and the futility of protest and of compliment alike. It was known that in a Provincial Conference lately, here in Surat itself, Sir Pherozeshah had secured the exclusion of the great questions of Boycott and National Education apart from Government aid. All evidences pointed one way: the Bombay Moderates were not the men for times like these; the Bombay Moderates must go!

So in the Nationalist camp suspicion cried aloud, and indignation grew on rumour. In the afternoon of Christmas Day, just before the President-elect arrived in insecure triumph, Lala Lajpat Rai himself went to the Nationalist camp—Lajpat Rai, the quiet, fearless man, with all the honour of dishonour still upon him; a Moderate, a close friend of Gokhale, but a patriot above suspicion, the man put forward as President by the Nationalists themselves, had he not refused to stand rather than hasten the dangerous breach. Surely he, if any one, might serve as peacemaker. He proposed a conference between the parties, five leaders a-side. The Nationalists appointed their representatives—Mr. Tilak, Mr. Arabindo Ghose, Mr. Khaparde of Nagpur, and two others. On the bare hope of peace, Lajpat Rai

sought Mr. Gokhale at the station as the President-elect steamed in. What a moment to arrange a conference! How could even Mr. Gokhale appoint five leaders to represent sixteen hundred delegates? For the twenty-two years of its existence the Congress had settled the form of its resolutions by a "Subjects Committee," which met for discussion in the evening after the Presidential address. Why depart from constitutional usage now?

So behind Rash Behari's triumphal carriage, amid the shouting and the garlands and the flags, death, distrust, and suspicion whispered of mortality. That night few slept. Backwards and forwards, from tent to tent and house to house, the leaders passed, discussing, consulting, deliberating, full of uncertainty and apprehension. Morning found them still apprehensive and uncertain. In a last effort to secure Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, if not peace, Mr. Tilak, Arabindo Ghose, and Mr. Khaparde went to his house with proposals. Mr. Moti Lal Ghose, of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, went with him as peacemaker, though that remarkable man had qualifications for the task about on a level with a porcupine's. To Surendra Nath they proposed two conditions under which they would refrain from opposing the President's election: the four Calcutta resolutions on Self-government, Swadeshi, the Boycott, and National Education must be repeated in the same form as last year, and some

"graceful allusion" must be made by one of the speakers on the election of the President, "to the desire of the public to have Lajpat Rai in the Chair." To make such an allusion graceful at such a moment might have puzzled even Surendra Nath's eloquence. But he was not the man to abandon either party in their need. He undertook both conditions for himself, and advised the Nationalists to seek an interview with Mr. Gokhale or Mr. Tribhovandas Malvi, a Surat gentleman, chairman of the Reception Committee, and supreme in the Congress till the President was elected. They did not attempt to see Mr. Gokhale. Mr. Malvi could not see them, because he was engaged in prayer.

One by one the fateful hours of the morning passed away. By noon the Congress delegates and the vast audience who had paid for seats began to gather in the Pandal. The meeting was to have begun at one, but, to allow time for burning the body of a Scinde delegate who had died, it was put off till half-past two. The delay was unfortunate. In that enormous pavilion of striped canvas full ten thousand people were already assembled. The architect had constructed it for something over ten thousand, and every place was full. The delegates from all the provinces of India, with a few to represent the Indian grievances in the Transvaal, numbered perhaps sixteen hundred, of whom five hundred might be called Extremists of one kind or the other.

On the platform sat some thirty to forty Indian ladies, Parsis, for the most part, but Hindus and even Mohammedans as well, significant of a deeper change than politics. The other thousands were the indistinguishable audience who had come to listen, or perhaps do more than listen. The whole interior, constructed on different levels so that all might see, rose and fell in waves of brilliant turbans, orange, crimson, gold, and white, according to the provinces from which they came, and in a black and solid square sat the bare-headed delegates from Bengal. Under the burning sun that pierced the roof the whole of that vast crowd remained for hours, disputing, arguing, exhorting each other in groups and districts, a dubious exercise of patience.

The platform people began to arrive. Among the first came Dr. Rutherford, Member of the Mother of Parliaments, now visiting India in hope of understanding a little of her distress. At his side was another of "the ruling race," come for the same purpose. As they advanced up the centre of the throng applause and shouts of "Bande Mataram" received them, but under all the shouting one heard low, penetrating hisses and angry cries of "Shame!" from men who no longer endured a sign of British rule, not even in the way of friendship. Then a quiet, white-turbaned figure, with sad determination in his look, entered from the side. Like one man, the ten thousand sprang to their feet.

Cheer followed cheer; it seemed as though the cheering would never cease. Who does not love the man that has suffered for a cause? It was Lajpat Rai.

A few minutes afterwards the Volunteers were seen lining the central passage again, and up the midst in a solid body came Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, President-elect; Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, the mitred Parsi; Mr. Wacha, the sane, unwearied master of statistics; Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, the orator of Bengal; Mr. Gokhale, whom some were tired of hearing called the Just; and other leaders of the Congress, famous and trusted for twenty years. At the sight, opposition shut its voice. The cheering rose, and rose again. In honour done to patriots so long conspicuous and so tenacious against contempt and failure, it seemed as though the day might yet pass without a rupture. The platform was reached. Mr. Tribhovandas Malvi, Chairman of the Reception Committee, rose to welcome the Congress in the name of his native Surat, and there was silence. He told the history of Surat, and passed on to the history of the Congress. People do not want to hear history when they are making it. Moghuls, Mahrattas, French Factories that stood on their very ground where now the Pandal stood—what did all of them matter? King Shivaji, he was dead. The early efforts of the Congress, the failures, the successes—all were dead. But the

present moment was alive and big with futurity. For heaven's sake, come to the present moment! So the assembly waited, impatient, but in silence, save that at the word "moderation" a breath of murmur stirred.

The address ended. Dewan Bahadur Ambalal S. Desai, late Chief Justice of progressive Baroda, learned in law, in banking, and commercial enterprise, rose formally to propose that Dr. Ghose, already designated President, should now take the Presidential Chair. At the name of Ghose, the deep murmur of dissent was heard again, and one shrill voice cried, "Never!" But the moment the Dewan sat down, Mr. Banerjea was seen standing in his place beside the table—Surendra Nath, the hero of a hundred platforms, grey-bearded son of thunder, youthful still in the service of the cause, by reason and temperament friend and champion of both parties alike. He was to second the proposal that Dr. Ghose should take the Chair. Hardly had his immense voice uttered ten words when, like the cracking of thunder that begins before the lightning ceases, the tumult burst, and no word more was heard.

Waving their arms, their scarves, their sticks, and umbrellas, a solid mass of delegates and spectators on the right of the Chair sprang to their feet and shouted without a moment's pause. Over their heads was the label, "Central Provinces"—Central

Provinces where Nagpur stands and the Congress was to have been. "Remember Nagpur!" they cried; "Remember Midnapur!" where, during the Bengal Provincial Conference a week or two before, Surendra Nath had attempted to keep the peace against the Extremists, and had actually sat on the same platform with a District Superintendent of Police! White turbans from Madras joined them. The whole ten thousand were on their feet, shouting for order, shouting for tumult. Mr. Malvi, still half in the Chair, rang his brass Benares bell, and rang in vain. Surendra Nath sprang upon the very table itself. Even a voice like his was not a whisper in the din. Again and again he shouted, unheard as silence. He sat down, and for a moment the storm was lulled. The voices of the leaders were audible, consulting in agitated tones—Dr. Ghose shrill, impatient, and perturbed with anger; Mr. Gokhale distressed, anxious, harassed with vain negotiation and sleepless nights. Already one caught the word "suspension." "If they will not hear Surendra Nath, whom will they hear?" said one. "It is an insult to the Congress," said another. "An insult to Bengal!" cried a third. Again Surendra Nath sprang on the table, and again the assembly roared with clamour. Again the Chairman rang his Benares bell, and rang in vain. In an inaudible voice like a sob he declared the sitting suspended. The platform rose, Surendra Nath

descended, the Indian ladies, who had beguiled the long waiting by chanting the hymn of "Bande Mataram" with quavering voice, filed out through a door at the back, and the leaders of the Congress movement disappeared into tents prepared for them.

After twenty-two years of steady and regular procedure the Congress had broken up in less than an hour. To the excited groups into which the great assembly split it seemed incredible. As when a growing child overturns the family routine and is astonished to find its parents distraught and weeping, so the Extremists stood a little amazed and dumbfounded at what they had done. Wild defence was met by wild denunciation, but no violence followed. It was still a polite and peaceful people, anxious to leave conciliation open. I conversed with Mr. Kelkar of Poona, editor of the *Mahratta*, as Mr. Tilak's lieutenant. The outbreak, he said, was accidental and unexpected. They had determined to oppose Dr. Ghose's election, but not by tumult; they would not even have opposed it had not the Moderate offer of compromise come too late. I visited the Nationalist camp, far across the town, and found Mr. Tilak himself, just returned from his dubious triumph, sitting naked in his cloth. He gave me the same assurance. The whole thing had been a mistake; it had all happened because the undertaking to renew the Calcutta resolutions had reached him too late—not till the

Chairman had begun his speech. The resolutions had then been handed to him by Mr. Gokhale, and he had admitted he would himself have been satisfied if certain changes in their wording had been removed and the original form restored. But by that time it was too late to reassure his followers, or re-establish his authority for peace.

It is hard to say how far this difficulty about the Calcutta resolutions was vital, or how far a sincere desire for peace might have explained it away. The mere delay in supplying them to Mr. Tilak was accidental—the fault of a Surat printer. Mr. Gokhale has said so, and his word is above suspicion.* But he admits that "slight verbal alterations had been made in one or two of them to remove ambiguity," and it was left, as usual, for the Subjects Committee to decide in what form they should finally be submitted to the Congress. Unhappily, after the events of the day, there was no chance or thought of a Subjects Committee meeting, and the disputed alterations remained unsettled. Some were obviously unimportant, unless a quarrel was desired on any straw. The change from "the system of government obtaining in the self-governing Colonies" to "the self-government enjoyed by other members of the British Empire" in a draft constitution implied no change of meaning, but,

* See Mr. Gokhale's letters on the Breach in the Congress, the *Bengalee*, January 13 and 14, 1908.

hearing of the criticism, Mr. Gokhale had himself inserted the word "self-governing" before "members of the British Empire." In the Swadeshi resolution, the Calcutta version had promised "to stimulate the production of indigenous articles by giving them preference over imported commodities even at some sacrifice"; in the new draft this sentence appeared as "to stimulate the consumption of indigenous articles by giving them preference where possible over imported commodities." Here the omission of the words "even at some sacrifice" was due to the inaccuracy of the newspaper copy, from which the resolution was taken. In the Calcutta resolution about National Education the clause proposing "to organize a system of education—literary, scientific, and technical—suited to the requirements of the country on national lines and under national control" had been altered in the new draft to a proposal "to organize an independent system of education—literary, scientific, and technical—suited to the requirements of the country." Mr. Gokhale defended the alteration on the ground that it avoided the triple repetition of the word "national," was more restrained in form, and "more in accord with what was being actually attempted in different parts of India." In the changes so far there was nothing to split a party determined to preserve its unity.

The difference in the remaining resolution was

vital. It went to the very root of the difference between the parties, and for the sake of it alone the proposed changes remain worthy of notice. In the original Calcutta resolution the Congress was "of opinion that the Boycott Movement inaugurated by Bengal by way of protest against the Partition of that province was and is legitimate." In the new form proposed for discussion in the Subjects Committee the wording ran, "This Congress is of opinion that the Boycott of foreign goods resorted to in Bengal by way of protest against the Partition of that province was and is legitimate." All the difference between Moderates and Extremists—just the one point which made genuine conciliation impossible—lay implied in that small difference of wording. "Boycott of foreign goods" was plain; it was a necessary part of Swadeshi, whether used as a political protest or as an encouragement to Indian industries. But "Boycott Movement" might mean the rejection of almost anything—the rejection of foreign goods, of foreign justice, foreign appointments, foreign education, foreign authority, taxation, Government itself. Already it had been so interpreted, both at the Calcutta Congress and frequently throughout the year. To yield on this point would be to hand over the Congress to Extremists for ever, to abandon the first principles of the Congress, which had been to work out the salvation of India in association with the British

rulers, and endeavour, in spite of Anglo-Indian mockery and hatred, to invoke the sense of justice which must somewhere surely lie in the heart of so great and free a people as the English. If these first principles were now to be abandoned, if the Congress was to be pledged to call upon India to go her own way, regardless of the English people and the English Government, the Congress as it had hitherto existed might as well give up the pretence of existence, and bequeath its effects to a new and different force. Here was no half-way house, no common ground for compromise. The alteration in the wording was vital.

On this difference at the root negotiation failed. The Boycott resolution was perhaps not even mentioned, but at the back of men's minds the difference lay. Through the evening and night negotiations continued. The Nationalists held another conference in their camp. Unless the Calcutta resolutions were replaced in the original form, they were instructed to oppose the election of Dr. Ghose, but to allow all speakers a fair hearing and create no tumult. Envoys passed between the camps; could not a joint committee of the parties meet for discussion? Could not Mr. Gokhale and Mr. Tilak meet? Could not Surendra Nath act as conciliator? Could not Dr. Rutherford, Member of the Mother of Parliaments, be asked for the advice of historic experience? Backwards and

forwards the negotiation went, and during that night also few slept.

The morning of December 27th again found them at variance, still uncertain, their mood more fretted by sleeplessness and anxiety. But a general anticipation of peace prevailed, because all foresaw what the enemies of reform would say if the Congress collapsed. By noon the Pandal was again full to overflowing. At one o'clock the Presidential procession entered. Again Dr. Rash Behari Ghose bore with him the printed copy of his Presidential address, which ought to have been delivered the afternoon before, and had, unhappily, appeared that morning in some of the Calcutta papers, with an attack upon the Extremists still unaltered.* At

* The main part of the address was a sorrowful indictment of Mr. Morley's government during the year, an answer to the Arbroath speech, and a criticism of the professed Simla reforms. It then passed to the situation between the two parties in India, and concluded with a strong repudiation of the Extremist position, and a warning to Extremists "not to be beguiled by phantoms, nor to expect they could end the British rule by boycotting the administration," whereas their only chance lay in co-operation with the Government in every measure likely to hasten their political emancipation. At the end of the copy which Dr. Ghose gave me, and which he intended to read to the Congress, was a manuscript note expressing deep regret at the murderous attempt upon Mr. Allen in Eastern Bengal, and the following peroration, also in manuscript :—

"I call upon you to fight for your rights, resolved not to be beaten, nor even knowing when you are beaten. To doubt of victory is to doubt the justice of our cause. It is to doubt our courage and the strength of our combination. It is to doubt the honesty and sincerity of a great people who are bound by every obligation of duty to redeem their pledges. It is to doubt the irresistible force of moral power in the affairs of nations. We may be baffled for a time, our efforts may

his side, as before, came the familiar Congress leaders, and amid stormy applause that breathed defiance to interruption, they took their seats behind the green table that stretched the whole length of the high-raised platform, before which there was no railing, but only, as it were, an escarpment for defence.

In the front row of the delegates, not in the place reserved for him on the platform, Mr. Tilak was seated. As the procession entered he sent a note to the Chairman by one of the boy Volunteers to say he wished to speak on the election of the President after the seconder had spoken. According to his own account, he added, "I wish to move an adjournment with a constructive proposal," apparently referring to another special conference of delegates from both sides. According to the Chairman and others who claimed to have seen the note, it proposed "an amendment for the adjournment of the Congress." It was a difference much argued afterwards, but the note itself had disappeared into chaos and could no more be recovered than the Sibyl's leaves that flitted round her cave.

In deliberate and expectant silence the proceedings began. Mr. Malvi called upon Mr. Banerjea

be abortive, but I have faith in the justice of our cause, faith in your patriotism, in the English nation, and in the sword of the avenging angel. Let us then work, not in sorrow or despondency, but in the joyful assurance that our cause will triumph and our country take her rightful place in the Federation of the Empire."

to take up his speech, seconding the appointment of Dr. Ghose as President. Speaking with a chastened exuberance, as of a hero rebuked by fate, Surendra Nath appealed to the past achievements of the Congress, appealed to the necessity of union for strength, and sat down amid silence, amid applause. Mr. Motilal Nehru, wealthy barrister of Allahabad, circumspect and respected, Moderate by nature in everything but generosity, said a few sentences. Every one went delicately, moving on a crust of ashes. In inaudible words Mr. Malvi proposed that Dr. Ghose should take the Chair as President, and amid various shouting he declared the motion carried. Heavy with years and knowledge, Dr. Ghose transferred himself to the seat, and rose at once to deliver that thoughtfully prepared address. "Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen," he began, "my first duty is to tender you my thanks for the signal honour you have done me."

Beyond his first duty he never went. As when lightning flashes in air surcharged with storm, Mr. Tilak was seen standing straight in front of the Presidential Chair itself, expostulating, protesting, all in that calm, decisive voice of his, the voice of a man indifferent to fate. He had given notice of an amendment, he was there to move it, and there he would remain. "You cannot move an adjournment of the Congress," cried Mr. Malvi; "I declare

you out of order." "I wish to move an amendment to the election of President, and you are not in the Chair," Mr. Tilak replied. "I declare you out of order!" cried Dr. Ghose. "You have not been elected," answered Mr. Tilak; "I appeal to the delegates."

Uproar drowned the rest. With folded arms Mr. Tilak faced the audience. On either side of him young Moderates sprang to their feet, wildly gesticulating vengeance. Shaking their fists and yelling to the air, they clamoured to hurl him down the steep of the platform. Behind him, Dr. Ghose mounted the table, and, ringing an unheard bell, harangued the storm in shrill, agitated, unintelligible denunciations. Restraining the rage of Moderates, ingeminating peace if ever man ingeminated, Mr. Gokhale, sweet-natured even in extremes, stood beside his old opponent, flinging out both arms to protect him from the threatened onset. But Mr. Tilak asked for no protection. He stood there with folded arms, defiant, calling on violence to do its worst, calling on violence to move him, for he would move for nothing else in hell or heaven. In front, the white-clad audience roared like a tumultuous sea.

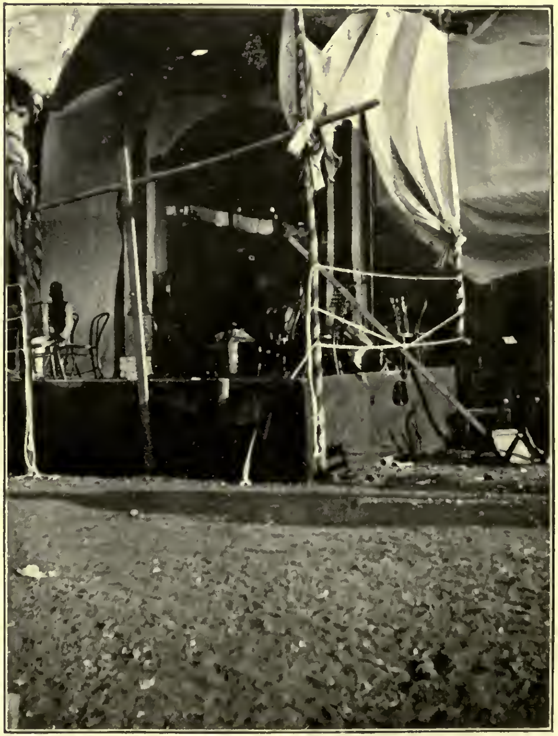
Suddenly something flew through the air—a shoe!—a Mahratta shoe!—reddish leather, pointed toe, sole studded with lead. It struck Surendra Nath Banerjea on the cheek; it cannoned off upon

Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. It flew, it fell, and, as at a given signal, white waves of turbaned men surged up the escarpment of the platform. Leaping, climbing, hissing the breath of fury, brandishing long sticks, they came, striking at any head that looked to them Moderate, and in another moment, between brown legs standing upon the green-baize table, I caught glimpses of the Indian National Congress dissolving in chaos.

Like Goethe at the battle of Valmy, I could have said, "To-day marks the beginning of a new era, and you can say that you were present at it."

The Indian ladies vanished. The platform leaders withdrew rapidly through a door at the back of the Pandal. Mr. Tilak was borne off by his followers. But in the vast pavilion itself a combat raged at large. Chairs, useless now except as missiles, flew through the air like shells discharged at a venture; long sticks clashed and shivered; blood flowed from broken heads. Group rushed upon group, delegate upon delegate. Breathing slaughter, they glared for victims. It was hard to tell friend from foe. Ten thousand men, all crowded together among ten thousand chairs, no uniform, no distinction, nothing to mark off Extremist from Moderate except the facial expression of a temperament—it was a confused and difficult conflict to maintain. Who would wish to fall to the bludgeon of a political friend? Nor was a

Entrance to the Pandal at Surat.



The Line of Retreat.

[Face p. 258.

certain chivalry or politeness wanting. Standing in the midst on a chair from which I could command the scene, I watched two champions, beaked vultures from the North, belabouring each other with murderous intent. By an adroit stroke one brought his stick down on the other's skull, and knocked his turban off. Instantly a truce was granted till the many yards of long white turban had been rapidly rolled tight again, and then with fresh fury the contest was renewed.

So with varied incident the combat swayed and raged and crackled. Suddenly the police appeared —no mistaking them in their short blue uniforms and the little clubs that made no political distinctions. Only about thirty entered, but thirty men who know what they want are to ten thousand who are not quite sure like a dog to sheep. With them came their Superintendent, their Inspector—Scottish, small and wizened as a prize jockey, calmly ordering here, ordering there, protected in the roaring turmoil only by courage and a penny cane. Bit by bit the tumult was driven out by the doors into the open. Within an hour the vast Pandal, strewn with broken chairs, sticks, and rags of raiment, stood empty as a banquet-hall deserted.

Even that night negotiations were again renewed. But suspicion had now gone too deep, and, as in an instinctive quarrel, each attempt at conciliation revealed a new distrust. Next day (December 28th)

opened with savage rumours of bloodshed, but two hundred police now guarded the wreck of the Pandal, and there, in anxious and regretful security, a convention of nine hundred Moderates met. They had signed an agreement to preserve order, to promote reform by constitutional means, and to aim at self-government similar to the self-government existing in other parts of the Empire. Dr. Ghose was in the Chair, some of the prominent leaders spoke, and a committee was appointed to watch events. The most significant point in the meeting was the presence of Lajpat Rai upon the platform, and his declaration that he would continue to fight under the old banner of the Congress was at such a moment worth a thousand men.

The Convention then turned to consider the woes of Indians in the Transvaal, whose delegates had been wandering about in the chaos, tearfully lamenting the vanity of human wishes. In the afternoon the Extremists also held a convention, and also appointed a committee to watch events. In the large courtyard of a private house they met in silent crowds. Grave and silent—I think without saying a single word—Mr. Arabindo Ghose took the Chair, and sat unmoved, with far-off eyes, as one who gazes at futurity. In clear, short sentences, without eloquence or passion, Mr. Tilak spoke till the stars shone out and some one kindled a lantern at his side. He reviewed the situation, accused the

"Bombay Moderates" of seeking favour with the Government and rejecting the Nationalist offers of compromise. He had no wish to destroy the Congress, for its prestige was useful; but a new spirit had entered Indian affairs, and unless the Congress was permeated with the new spirit it had better die—it was dead already. By the new spirit he meant self-confidence and self-assertion, contrasted with the old methods of petitions for rights, appeals for justice, and other forms of mendicancy which the British Government answered with elusive promises, and the Anglo-Indians with scorn.

So, on that note of deep and perhaps irreconcilable divergence, the twenty-third Indian National Congress ended. Many delegates remained in Surat for a day or two, taking part in conferences upon child-marriage, widow-remarriage, the education of women, Indian industries, the drink problem, the revelations of the Divine Will, and other questions of permanent interest for Indian life. But the Congress was over. The work of the old Congress as it had existed for all those years was rolled up and done. Re-union of Moderate and Extremist in some form might still be possible; for a militant party, a nationalist party, an Opposition is never long divided, and oppression is a fine reconciler. But breach or no breach, all felt the Congress would never be the same again. In the twinkling of a shoe it had been changed, and a new spirit, a

different and difficult spirit, had indeed arisen in the country.

As I returned with the leaders of the Congress movement in the train, each station rang with shouts of "Down with Rash Behari!" "Down with Gokhale!" "Down with Surendra Nath!" Not a cheer, not a single cry of "Jai!" That was on a Sunday, and on the Wednesday before no cheering, no garlands had seemed enough. It had been roses, roses all the way.

THE SACRED RIVER.

[*Face p.* 262.

CHAPTER XIV

A City of God

I HAD escaped to the Ganges, as myriads of transitory pilgrims have escaped before. From the distractions of politics and the dust of practical reforms I had come to the quiet river, sliding under immemorial walls. The water was still white and dove-coloured with morning, but already along the thin crescent of the shore, white-robed men and women were coming down the steps with naked feet, and silently approaching the edge. They threw long strings of marigolds into the stream. Stooping down, they scooped up the water in brazen pots, and set a marigold upon the mouth of each. Hung with flowers, and bearing on their foreheads the triple mark of the god, men settled cross-legged upon slabs of stone or wooden platforms, and plunged at once into prayer, or, opening long and narrow books, began to recite aloud the words of inspired ancestors. Men and women alike, still draped in white, walked step by step down into the water, till it passed over their heads, and then came

back step by step, and stood dripping in prayer. They raised water in their hands, splashed it three times on their mouths and foreheads, and with arms lifted to the risen sun, poured what was left back into the river. Covering her face with her hands, one girl knelt upon the bare stone so long in adoration that the sun dried her one white length of sari, and it hung loose around her form again.

The common life of the holy city began, and the calling of the milkmen, the cake-sellers, the fruiterers, and drivers of bullock-carts mingled with the temple bells. They brought the dead down to the river, hung with marigolds, and wrapped in cotton cloths as when they lived. Pushing them feet forwards a little way out from shore, they let them soak in the holy water until wooden pyres should be ready to consume their deserted forms, happy in a double purification. Washerwomen carried down their bundles of linen, and swung each piece over their heads again and again upon flat stones in the water, until it was cleansed, with the added advantage of sanctity. Ascetics in brick-dust robes passed up and down among the crowd, bearing long staves in memory of their vow to constrain their thoughts, their speech, and their desires. Other ascetics, dressed only in a transparent coating of ashes, sat in perpetual contemplation, forgetful of the body and the world. One man I saw in faded yellow robe, worn by sun and rain, passing quietly

ON THE BANK.

[Face p. 264.

in and out of the worshipping throng, as he followed the little footpath by the water's brink. He was of those who all the year long tread the bank of the Ganges, from her source in the mountains to her mouth among the forest swamps, and back again to her source in the mountains. On that day's walk he happened to be passing again through her most sacred city, but that seemed hardly to interrupt his contemplation of her holiness.

"Yours is the Order I should belong to by nature," I said, giving him a halfpenny, for which he had not asked.

"For you it would be easy and difficult," he answered, in good English, and led me up many steps and along galleries overhanging a cliff of ruinous masonry to a cool courtyard, where Brahmans are daily fed on boiled rice and salt, laid out upon a plate of stitched banana leaves.

"Obviously it would be easy for you as for any one," he went on as we climbed up, after his meal, to the top of the flat roof where a little shelter had been erected for shade and worship; "but for you it would be difficult also, because you hang upon the world, and your soul is entangled in illusions and desires. Like all your people, you call the unreal things realities, and for reality you have no name."

Having devoted himself for a while to prayer, he continued: "You see this low parapet? Many

years ago a boy was seated upon it reading a Sanscrit book of wisdom, when, it is thought, a monkey, inspired by the god, pushed him, and he fell. Look over and you will see the projecting slab half way down which he broke as he fell. They gathered up his shattered body, and laid it, almost alive, in the Ganges. I cannot doubt that he attained at once to salvation, his soul returning to the universal consciousness, as the space inside a pot returns to universal space when the pot is broken. And in his salvation I may claim a share, for I was his father."

It was noon, and the sun blazed upon the roof. Green parrots flew screaming among the trees of a garden far below us. The hum of the city arose, pierced with loud cries, and over the far-off iron bridge across the Ganges a train was slowly passing with prolonged and shrieking whistle. But still the crowding pilgrims moved down the steps to the water's edge, and bathed and offered flowers, and stretched up their hands in silent adoration, or recited ancient and sacred words aloud.

"It is possible for you," I said, after a long time, "to desire escape from the danger of rebirth, and to speak of being merged in the universal consciousness as salvation. But how about these people who come in millions to the river? All their lives they struggle only to live. From day to day their thought is only to keep alight their little glimmer

The Burning Place.

The River Walls.

[*Face p.* 266.

of life, and hand it on to others who are their children. How is it to be supposed that they come to the river so wearied of existence as to pray only to be saved from being born again? I myself, who am one of them, would walk in the opposite direction if I thought the river was going to extinguish my life, and for choice I should rather be born a mouse than nothing."

"You remind me," he answered, "of those worshippers of Vishnu, who pray in great humility, 'Let me be born a cat or dog, if only I may love thee, O God.' It is a great prayer, and you may join in it, for, being a wanderer through the world, you can always hope to become a religious man, avoiding the many-sided degradation of which people tell me who have visited the West. I, too, was once engaged in common business, managing large estates in this very city, and I know the rich men in the streets, though they cannot now tell who passes them so close. But each day I gave much time to contemplation, and I took the vow of kindliness to every living thing, just as you see those Jain monks there who are feeding ants with sugar, and would not wittingly kill a cholera germ; or like those wandering Sisters of the faith who wear a strip of white felt across their mouths lest they should breathe a midge to death, and carry soft brooms in their hands to sweep the place where they are about to sit, lest the weight of their frail

bodies should crush an irrecoverable life. By such means, even in your present body, you may begin to penetrate the illusions of existence, and at rare moments may perceive some gleam from what one of your poets has called the white radiance of eternity.

"As for these pilgrims," he went on, "they are like a woman who lights her cow-dung fire at evening, not considering as she cooks that the flame is composed of ten divisions, each symbolic of a faculty of the soul. Or they are like a man who walks by the light of sun and moon, not considering that sun and moon are nothing but symbols of creative power, as are men and women, fire and water, heat and cold. Or they are like the nautch girls who have a separate song for every hour of the day and night, but do not know that their songs are only the pulses of eternity. In cooking, in light, and in song, each finds an ignorant joy, and in the same way these pilgrims have a dim sense of righteousness and purification in the outward symbols of truths that they will never learn in their present life. By such means, for a few hours together, they may free themselves from the illusions of existence, and in some cases even reach the state of those highly religious men who devour putrid cats, to prove that in their estimation all material things are alike, all being equally unimportant.

A Place of Prayer.

[*Face p.* 268.

"But for people like you," he continued with pity, "what can one say? You are still ensnared by political anxieties, artistic interests, and the desires of personality. You have far to go before, by contemplation and hard discipline, you perceive how like happiness is to its opposite—how accurately the joy of existence may be compared to a fire-fly wandering in an unlimited vault of darkness, or to the inch of cool shadow thrown by a snake's head upon a burning desert. Till you can reach that supreme state when birth, and life, and death have no separate meaning, you have far to go. But there is always hope for one who will begin by overcoming earthly desire. For, as you may have heard, there has been one being and one alone who in this flesh attained to salvation without death, and he was Janaka, the father of Sita, Rama's wife. He sat still, you remember, with one hand in a blazing fire and the other upon a woman's breast, showing that to him the one was the same as the other, and both indifferent."

We descended, and I went away in the rapid twilight, sorrowful because I was not in the least like Janaka. But as I went, I came to the courtyard of a temple to Shiva, the dissolver of existence, and there in the darkness I found a lonely woman walking round and round a sacred tree, driven by the blind desire to bear a child. So untameable among the unlearned is the passion for life.

CHAPTER XV

The Patient Earth

"Cold!" I said, just for something to say, as I came out of the dak-bungalow into the thin January air before sunrise, and met an educated Indian, who said "Good morning!"

"Yes, sir," he answered. "You'd have thought it cold if you had slept where I did." And he pointed to a dusty place, where he had evidently been lying in front of the house.

"Why on earth did you sleep there?" I asked; "there was plenty of room inside."

"I'm a Famine official, and I have been living inside for some nights past," he answered. "But when I got back at nine o'clock last night, I found you were reading in one room and your boy had gone to sleep in the other, so I stayed out here."

"My boy!" I said. "Why, he sleeps everywhere! On the floor of my room, at the door—anywhere! Why didn't you come in?"

"Well, you see," he answered, with hesitation, "I saw you were an Englishman, and I knew that

if I had come in, you'd have kicked me out, and I didn't want to be kicked out. That's why."

As I had been three months in India, I was not surprised, but as a patriot I found it hard to reply, so I turned the conversation to Famine and Relief.

We were in the United Provinces, where that season's famine was particularly bad. Mr. Theodore Morison has explained that in India the word "famine" is now equivalent only to a "suspension of agricultural industry." * "Now that the relief of the unemployed is undertaken by Government," he says, "it is not a fact that any considerable proportion of the people die of hunger when the agricultural industry is interrupted." In the United Provinces, then, agricultural industry was suspended, and the cause of the suspension was obvious. For close on four and a half months not a drop of rain had fallen, and day after day the sun rose and set in a sky as clear and hard as steel. Rain ought to have lasted well into October, and in December to have begun again, and here was the second week in January without a drop since August. The December harvest was lost, and the ground so hard that scarcely a quarter of the usual crops had been sown for the greater harvest due in March. The horror of past famines

* "The Industrial Organization of an Indian Province," p. 241. The whole of that most interesting book on village life in the United Provinces might be read in connection with this chapter.

is easily obliterated in India, for what would you expect of a people to whom history is but a sleep and a forgetting? But men who had known the course of Indian famines since the seventies told me that unless rain came within a fortnight that year's famine would be worse than any that India had ever suffered.*

Coming twenty or thirty miles south of the Jumna from Allahabad, where the Jumna and Ganges join, I had passed through a country that became continually more desert. It was nearly flat, and rather thickly covered with isolated thorns and the heavy mango trees, which yield a fruit much sought after by the villagers, but now regarded as a chief cause of cholera in famine time. So far, the trees had not been stript bare for fodder, as I afterwards saw them round Delhi, and the cattle were still kept from the unholy butcher's hands by a diet of chopped millet stalks, with linseed for the milkers. The land was divided into tiny fields, about the size of one to four tennis-courts, marked off by earthen banks, along the top of which there is a right of way. Round the mud villages, wherever the wells still held water, some of these fields were green with potatoes or young wheat, or a tall bushy pulse with

* Mr. Theodore Morison thinks there is no evidence that famines are more frequent now than in the past, and he gives a summary of the very meagre records that have come down to us of eighteenth-century famines: *ibid.* chap. x.

A Bullock Well. [*Face p.* 272.

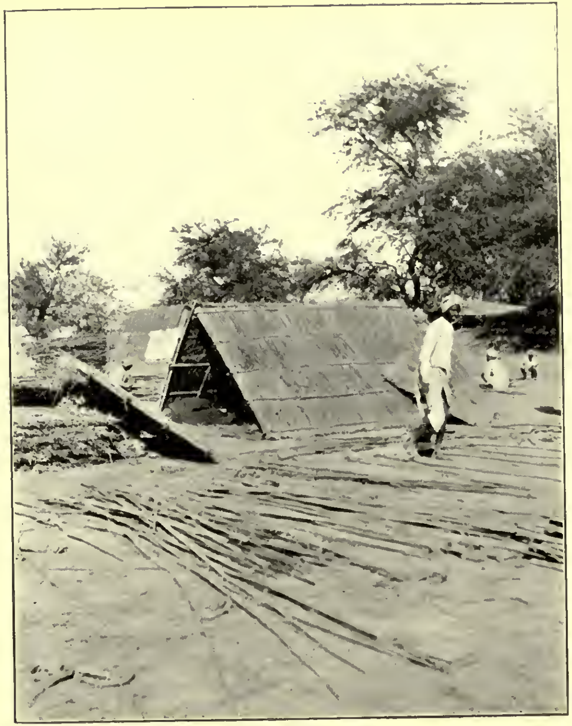
yellow flower, and all day long the ryots were busy distributing the precious water through little channels among the crops. I suppose no form of irrigation surpasses the wells in value, though very many of them are sunk only temporarily in times of drought, on account of the expense of sinking a "pukka" or masonry shaft. As in most parts of India that I visited, the water is usually drawn up in one or two large bags by bullocks harnessed to the end of a rope and driven down a steep incline. But many of the wells were dry, and so were many of the tanks or public ponds, which, having originally supplied most of the mud for the village habitations, afterwards become the social centres of village life. In fact, the only tank I saw with a plentiful supply of water left was one that three crocodiles had wisely selected for their home. They were not so large as the dragonish monsters I had shot at in West Africa, but large enough to disturb the social centre of any English green. Two or three hundred yards away from the village wells the little squares and oblongs of fields were absolutely bare, not a weed showing. For miles on miles the drab surface of the earth was hard and barren as a brick pavement.

The famine in Orissa was due to flood—an unforeseen calamity—and though the area was small in comparison, the horror of the starvation was much worse than anything in the United Provinces.

The effect of drought can be foreseen, and it is one of the Government's recognized functions to keep people alive in famine. Preparations for relief had begun in October, and at the head of the administration stood Sir John Hewett, the Lieutenant-Governor, in whom all Indians felt a peculiar confidence. But apart from his special influence, it is in famine time, as I have noticed before, that the zeal and sympathy of our officials are seen at their best. Men who in ordinary seasons would treat all Indians alike with habitual contumely, are perfectly willing to die for them in their distress, and once I travelled in a cabin with a high legal official in Allahabad, not connected in any way with relief, whose voyage out was made more and more miserable, because at every port came the news of continued drought in the province. Such sympathy from above is a memory of our old land-owning traditions, a relic of noblesse and its obligations, and, as long as our superiority is as undisputed as a captain's or a curate's, we are particularly successful in exercising this devoted patronage.

As no rain fell, "test works" were established in December. On test works heavy tasks like road-making are set, and no payment is given unless the work is done. Nothing but real poverty and hunger will drive people to work of this kind, and so, when two thousand men were found to be labouring at each of the test works, it was assumed that

Going to Work.



Relief Shelters.

[*Face p.* 274.

hunger was general, and "a state of famine" was officially proclaimed. A state of famine implies relief works on which the Government pays a fixed rate of wages to all workers, and assistance of some kind is given to every one—women, children, babies, and the old, as well as the able-bodied workers. The rate is decided by the Famine Commissioner according to his estimate of the price of grain. In this case he had calculated the price of grain for the time being at 18 lb. (9 seers) to the rupee (1*s.* 4*d.*). By the "Wages Table for Public Works," which is as easy to work with and as indisputable as a table of logarithms, this price gave the rate of wages at 2*d.* a day for diggers, whether men or women (but hardly any women consent to dig), 1½*d.* a day for carriers of earth (chiefly women), 1*d.* for children, and ½*d.* a day for babies.*

A few exceptional cases are specially treated. Any woman, for instance, who presents the works with a new baby is rewarded with a special donation of 1*s.* 4*d.* down. The wages were paid out of a guarded treasure tent every afternoon, and the people bought their own food from local merchants, who generally conveyed the grain on the backs of bullocks from Allahabad. The women ground it themselves, and made it into a sticky paste with a little salt, and that was what the families lived upon.

* If paid in grain the ration is 2 lb. 4 oz. for a man, 1 lb. 12 oz. for a woman, 1 lb. 4 oz. for a child.

Drinking water was served from kerosene tins by Brahmans so that none might be defiled.

Villagers in want of the wage looked round the plain at sunrise for a red flag hoisted on a long pole. That showed the "recruiting station," and there the families congregated in long rows, waiting to be allotted to gangers chosen from their own number. If any were already too starved for labour, they were fed up to working point; but there were none of the brown skeletons here that I saw in Orissa, because, as the disaster was not sudden, the relief had begun while the people were still in good condition. When the gangs were arranged, they were led out to some allotted portion of the works, the fellow-villagers remaining together for the stimulus of public opinion. In other districts the relief works took the form of new roads, but where I was the engineers had designed two great bunds or dams to catch the monsoon rains over a large and gently sloping area. For a few months each year shallow tanks would thus be formed, which could be tapped as required for the fields at a lower level, and, when dry, would leave a surface enriched with silt and moisture. The dams were called Garhaiya Kalan and Telghana from neighbouring villages, and one was seven miles long, the other a mile and a half. If these were not sufficient for the winter's relief work, many more might be constructed, and the Government could always hope to

On the Relief Works.

[*Face p.* 276.

recover part of the outlay by the increased value of the land, for which the landowners (zemindars) would as usual have to pay about half their income as revenue. And as I thought of it, I sighed for the orgy of battleships and old age pensions which we should enjoy if only our Government at home could scoop up the unearned increment like that!

The process of constructing the dams was simple. Engineers had fixed the required levels and breadths by upright poles with strings stretched between them, and all that the workers had to do was to pile up earth till the strings were just covered and disappeared from sight. The earth was cut from both sides of the dam, and each digger's daily task, with the help of a woman carrier, was to clear a plot of earth 13 ft. by 8 ft., and 1 ft. deep. A pick and hoe were supplied by Government, but the natives refused the new English-made tools, not from any Swadeshi prejudice, but because they were rotten and would not cut. Women carried the earth in baskets made in the gaols and threw it on the dam. Weaker women, cripples aud children broke up the clods, patting them rather gently with wooden implements till the surface was fairly smooth and solid. That was all the work. If the allotted task fell short, the payment of the whole gang of fellow-villagers was reduced, so that each worker had an interest in keeping all his friends up to the mark, and I did not hear any complaints about reductions.

What I did hear were the common complaints of humanity that bellies were not full, that dealers gave short weight, and that some parts of the ground were harder to dig than others. By that time there were twenty thousand workers on relief in this small district alone, and the numbers were daily increasing. When people have to be saved by averages of thousands together, how can you stop to give complete satisfaction? It is not so that heaven is filled.

The hope was that, as the famine had been taken in time, the cholera, which comes in the rearward of famine, might be avoided; and it was. The only definite disease I noticed was a very common paralysis of the knees, which crippled both men and women, but was not directly due to famine. The people themselves attributed it to a kind of pea they eat, and the pea had lately been forbidden to be sold on Government works. I had seen the same kind of paralysis in the stone quarries at Les Baux in Provence, where it was attributed to the dust; but it seems hard to connect the two cases. Otherwise, the people were as healthy as one can be on an average of 1½*d.* a day. Most of them went back to their own villages in the evening. For those who lived too far away tiny huts or coverts of bamboo frames thatched with straw were provided. When the dams were finished, they were to be "departmentally watched and maintained."

When I saw Sir John Hewett a short time

afterwards at Agra, he told me he had over 150,000 workers on the relief works, and over 310,000 receiving relief of one kind or another. Owing to the famine the yield of grain in his province was 3,500,000 tons below the normal ; rice yielded only a quarter of the average ; and £4,000,000 had been lost on the sugar and cotton crops combined. To meet the scarcity, Government had already suspended 120 lakhs (£800,000) of land revenue, a large part of which would be permanently remitted, and had advanced about £1,000,000 for relief, the purchase of seed, and sinking of temporary wells. Speaking at Lucknow a few days later (January 25, 1908) Sir John Hewett said :—

> "These measures have given heart to the people, provided occupation in the villages at remunerative rates of wages, and prevented the occurrence of crime. The people themselves have met the crisis in the most commendable spirit. Never was there a famine in which the people and the Government and its officers showed a more united front than the present one. The ryots have toiled early and late to prepare and sow their fields for the spring harvest, and they have not toiled in vain."

That speech was made, however, after blessed rain had fallen. When I was at Agra, one inch of rain suddenly fell in one night, and I shall not forget the joyful change upon the faces of the officials. It must be remembered also that, excellent as the administration of the famine relief was, and fully as

the Lieutenant-Governor deserves his popularity, the United Provinces is probably a district all the easier to govern just because it is comparatively backward, and out of its population of nearly 50,000,000 about 70 per cent. are directly dependent upon agriculture for their living.*

In his Financial Statement to the Viceroy's Council (March 20, 1908), Mr. E. N. Baker, now Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, calculated that the famine of the year had affected an area with a population of about 49 millions. It had raised the price of wheat so high that the export from India had almost wholly stopped, while the Burma rice crop had been diverted to India to take the place of what was lost. He estimated the amount of takávi advances, or village loans for wells, seed, etc., for the preceding and present years together at 4 crores of rupees (about £2,650,000), and the amount of revenue suspended for the two years at nearly 360 lakhs (nearly £2,400,000), of which a large proportion must be permanently remitted. The total loss to the State by loss of revenue and increase of expenditure combined he estimated at 985 lakhs (about £6,633,000) for the two years. He added the significant comment :—

"The distress caused by high prices has undoubtedly affected all classes, and has pressed with great severity on

* For the figures at the last census and the division of occupations, see "The Industrial Organization of an Indian Province," chap. i.

the urban populations, and on all who are dependent on small fixed incomes. But the more painful conditions which we associate with widespread famine in India—the emaciation, the aimless wandering, the disruption of social ties, and the increase of crime—are as yet so rare and exceptional as to be scarcely noticeable. The energy and determination with which the people have themselves faced the calamity have been observed on all hands, and we may reasonably hope that if the coming season is favourable the progress ot the country will resume its normal course, without any such check as a famine on a similar scale would have caused in bygone times."*

That sounds fairly simple, and, of course, its hopefulness was justified; but the whole question of the famine brought one up short against problems that may be common to all countries, but are perhaps more difficult in India, because under our rule the economic stages are becoming mixed together. What Mr. Baker, for instance, says about the pressure upon urban populations and small fixed incomes owing to the famine is true; but then the pressure appears to be permanent, famine or no famine. The rise in price of ordinary provisions seems to be continuous and general. I heard the same complaint in the Deccan, in Eastern Bengal, Calcutta, Benares, Allahabad, Delhi, and Lahore. Within twenty years wages may have doubled, but the cost of common food has quadrupled. In Bengal, for example, Mr. Chunder Nath Bose,

* Indian Financial Statement, 1908–9, p. 4.

Fellow of the Calcutta University, who knew the prices as a boy, says they have gone up fourfold or even tenfold for the staples of Bengal diet, such as rice, wheat, potatoes, brinjal, dal, fish, and, what is worst, for milk and ghi (clarified butter).* Many explanations were given me by English and Indian alike—the export of grain, the growth of jute, the fixing of the rupee, the increased circulation of rupees before 1893, and the transition from payment in kind to payment in cash. Some of these explanations are contradictory, and all of them have been vehemently contradicted. But as to the result, there appeared to be no doubt: life is becoming harder for all working people, especially for all workers on fixed incomes, and the only people who do not notice the increasing burden are the few with "rapidly expanding business" and those who could not possibly eat up to their incomes if they tried.

It was still more difficult to discover the real condition of the peasants and labourers in the country compared to the workpeople in the towns. In villages near the relief works, the cultivators (ryots) told me they paid sometimes one and sometimes ten rupees a bigha (rather over half an acre) to the zemindar, but their average rent appeared to

* "England's Administration of India" (1907); the author, besides describing minutely the growing poverty of small officials, etc., with fixed incomes, dwells on the dyspepsia and ill-health from overstrain and unwholesome hours introduced by English habits, but especially on the increasing devastation of malaria.

be about two rupees a bigha (say *5s. 6d.* an acre). Some said they thought they made or saved ten or even twenty rupees a year for marriages, births, funerals, ceremonies, and pilgrimages. But nearly all of them said they saved nothing. They admitted, however, that for a daughter's marriage a ryot would sometimes spend as much as two hundred rupees, borrowed from the zemindar or banya (money-lender), and when I asked one of them what he borrowed on if he had no savings, he replied that he borrowed on his "respectability," which is, I suppose, what most people borrow on. At the back of the borrower's mind, I think, is the continual hope for a "bumper" crop that will start him free again, but as the rate of interest without solid security was anything from 25 to 36 per cent. both here and in the Punjab, the ryot often became little more than a labourer in the employment of the money-lender, who advanced him seed and stock and took the crop. In a village outside Lahore I found the cultivators had agreed among themselves not to spend money on marriages in future, though these village festivals had been their only joy, and now, unless a juggler or reciter came round, they had nothing whatever to break the monotony of toil upon the land—not even a school. Neither were there any schools in the villages I visited near Allahabad, nor in those near Delhi.

But though in many cases the ryot had become

little better than a labourer in the employment of a landowner or money-lender, there was still a recognized class of landless labourers below him. In the villages near the relief works the labourer (who is always paid in kind) got 2½ lbs. of grain for a day's work from dawn to dark with two hours off, and he could count on work most of the year if the rains were good. He also received one pair of shoes, one cloth, and ground for his hut, which he built himself. Some of the labourers told me of a further gift of three rupees a year (4*s.*) which seemed to be a kind of Christmas-box. If the wife worked she got 1⅛ lb. of grain a day. Turned into money, at the village price of grain, the labourer's wage would thus be about 2*d.* a day, apart from his wife's earnings (say 1*d.*) and the extras I have mentioned.*

Beside the money-lender, the landowner, the cultivator, and the labourer, I found in every village one or two artisans, though the division of industry was not exact, and some of the artisans did a little agriculture as well. Nearly all villages seem to have a barber, a potter, a carpenter, "sweepers" or scavengers, and one or two priestly families to perform the common rites that mankind wants, to bless the harvest, foretell the weather, and control

* For the condition of the landless class, see "The Industrial Organization, etc.," p. 191, where Mr. Morison, commenting on Mr. Crooke's Report of 1888, also comes to the conclusion that the average value of a labourer's wage is now about 2 annas (2*d.*).

Swadeshi Weavers, Bombay Mills.

Swadeshi Weavers, Madras Handlooms.

[*Face p.* 284.

the local ghosts. In some villages I also found the handloom weaver, and in a Mohammedan village near Lahore the weaver told me he could make ten yards a day, which he valued at five annas, his wife spinning the yarn by walking to and fro as on a rope-walk. In the same village the carpenter was specially employed on making water-wheels. But the village artisans, as a rule, are not paid by the job but are allowed a fairly regular income by the village, each family contributing so many measures of grain at each of the two harvests for their support. For instance, the village priest gets about 5 lb. of grain per plough at harvest, but the potter gets 20 lb. per plough and the carpenter 50 lb.*

As far as mere money-value goes, it is not very hard to compare the earnings of village labourers and artisans with the earnings of workpeople in the towns. In the eighty or ninety cotton mills of Bombay, for instance, the average man's wages are 18 rupees a month, or a little over 10*d.* a day; a woman's highest wage is a fraction under 7*d.* a day, and half-time children, nominally over nine years old and under fourteen, get 2¾*d.* a day, which is more than the average labourer's wage in the village. At a mill in Delhi I found the wages were less—12 rupees a month instead of 18 for men, and 6

* William Crooke's "Enquiry into the Economic Condition of the Agricultural and Labouring Classes in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh," 1888: quoted by Mr. Morison, *ibid.*, p. 179.

rupees instead of 8 for boys; but the hours of labour were twelve with one hour off instead of thirteen with (nominally) only half an hour off. In reality, I think it would be quite impossible to get Indians to do what Lancashire people would call work for twelve or thirteen hours at a stretch, with only those little breaks. At all events, it is not done.

By the measure of money, then, the Bombay mill-hand would seem to be about five times better off than the village labourer of the United Provinces. In so far as most people enjoy living in swarms rather than in isolation, he is better off; but otherwise the lot of both is perhaps almost equally unenviable. The hours in a Bombay mill are spent in monotonous labour, among hideous noise, and in a fluffy atmosphere, where there are no fans to decrease the dust, the heat, or the smell. All round the factories, workmen's dwellings, or "chawls," have sprung up, usually in galleries of single rooms along the first floor above a row of open shops. The average rent is one rupee (1*s.* 4*d.*) a week for a room, and the whole family lives in one room, in which, as a rule, there is no window but the door. Most families are saved a lot of dusting and breakages by having no furniture except a metal cooking-pot for the rice and dal—a sort of split pea. These are cooked in cocoanut oil, and form the almost invariable food, though in one black hole I

WORKMEN'S DWELLINGS, BOMBAY.

[*Face p.* 286.

did see a woman cooking something that smelt like the ghost of a fish, and sometimes a family launched out into a maize pancake. In one or two rooms there were real decorations—portraits of Rama, of Krishna, or the King—and for a week every doorway was hung with a string of dry leaves, ears of rice, and little crimson flowers like knapweed, in memory, I suppose, of some old village festival. All night long, under a waning moon, the mill hands sat in the verandahs of these wretched homes, beating drums, and chanting their barbaric scales—"praising God," as they said when we asked them; but what form of God, or for what reason they praised Him, they could not explain.

Villagers, of course, retained the usual advantages of country life—fresh air, purer food, and greater bodily freedom and variety in labour. But the inner conditions of life were otherwise much the same. In furniture, even the fairly well-to-do cultivators seldom went beyond a fireplace (usually outside), a grain store, a plank bed, some rags, some brass pots and dishes, and in rare cases a few silver ornaments on the legs and arms of the women as the most convenient bank. All necessary architecture, even in mud hovels, is beautiful, and so are all implements for human use, but I never saw any attempt at decoration or conscious beauty. It would be absurd to call the Indian peasants ignorant, for

they understand their own business quite as well as we understand ours, and in their own knowledge they have little to learn. But in most villages the isolation and absence of schools make them unnecessarily superstitious and apprehensive of unreal dangers. Almost within sight of Lahore, the women rushed away to the flat roof-tops with their children for fear I should blight their souls, and the men could not imagine what I might be, except a revenue collector, a pill doctor, or an official come to poison the wells with plague. Near Delhi the women turned their faces sharply to the wall at my shadow, and lived in perpetual terror of "soldiers," though for no definite reason. At the foot of the Himalaya up from Hardwar, no one in the village had heard of the Viceroy, or of the Congress, or of Lajpat Rai, though it was little more than twenty-four hours' journey from Lahore. Only one man knew what a newspaper was, or had ever seen one, and neither he nor any one else could have read a word of it. One old man said he knew they were governed by England, but he had no notion what sort of a thing England was. Another old man in a village within ten miles of Delhi told me that, although he knew nothing about England, he was grateful to the English because when he was a boy his grandfather used to tell him of horrible murders and lootings, but there were hardly any of such terrors now. And as that was one of the few nice

Bombay Mill-hands.

[*Face p.* 288.

things I heard about ourselves in India, I will conclude with it.

But the central problems remain untouched—the problems of the famines, the rise in prices, and of the poverty, which is probably increasing. Is the rainfall permanently growing less, and, if so, have the alterations in the Nile anything to do with it? Is the distress more terrible because the cultivators sell their grain, largely for export, instead of hoarding some proportion of it? Or is it true that they ever hoarded it? Is it want of money rather than want of grain that is bringing ruin on the people? All these things are said.* But I would point out one simple and obvious thing about the famine district that I visited in the United Provinces. The land there by its direct and immediate yield was expected to support, in the first place, the Government, with its expensive army and civil service; in the second place, the landowners (zemindars) who usually did the same kind of work as our landowners at home—collecting rents; in the third place, the farmers (ryots), who sold the crops, paid the rent, and worked themselves when poverty compelled them; in the fourth place, the labourers, who worked in good years and starved in bad; in the fifth place, the artisans, who worked for civilization and decency;

* Sir William Wedderburn has discussed these and similar problems in his "Note on Sir Antony MacDonnell's Famine Report of 1901," and in many other pamphlets.

in the sixth place, the priests, who worked for religion and the soul; and in the seventh place, the money-lenders, who scooped up an interest of about 30 per cent. when they could get it. Patient as this old earth is, it seems to me that in parts of India her patience is a little overburdened.

CHAPTER XVI

The Arya Samaj

It was evening service, at the hour when sunset is still bright, but if you stare into the sky, you suddenly see the stars. A few score of boys and young men were gathered round a small square pit, in which a fire of dry sticks was burning with a yellow flame. They were dressed in long cotton cloths of yellow or white, and, sitting in rows, they chanted the ancient Vedic hymns in praise of God, with the peculiar intervals and nasal quaverings of the East. In their midst, by the edge of the pit, sat their Guru, or teacher, and from time to time he ladled clarified butter into the fire, while youths from each of the other sides of the square threw in handfuls of rice and fragrant woods or herbs. Meantime the chanting never ceased, but with a concentrated vehemence all raised to the air the eternal Sanscrit words, revealed to the Aryan race before recorded history, so that they might never be devoid of the holiest wisdom, but bear it with them across mountains of ice and over sunburnt plains to the furthest world. At the end, all stood up for the

final evening hymn, and then dispersed, leaving the fire burning as a symbol of man's soul, and of the divine power, and of the transfiguration of the spirit by flame and purity.

That form of worship is celebrated every morning and evening by all Vedic believers, whether assembled or alone. But I saw it first at one of the students' homes in Lahore, where a branch of the Arya Samaj, or Aryan Society, has a school and an "Anglo-Vedic College," numbering about 1800 members together. Lala Lajpat Rai sat next me, for it was to this branch that he had devoted all his labours for social and religious reform, till injustice drove him to turn aside into politics from the true objects of the Samaj. I speak of a branch because, like most vital movements, the Samaj is divided into parties, one holding its services inside the crowded old city itself, the other just outside the ancient walls. As usually happens, the two parties in the religion have split on unessential points, for which they are prepared to die, though not to kill. But both claim to follow the doctrines of their founder, Dayananda Saraswati, who quitted this stage of existence at Ajmere in 1883, after a wandering life of holy poverty given up entirely to the denunciation of idols, caste restrictions, animal sacrifices, licentious rites, the multiplicity of deities, and other accretions with which frail humanity has surrounded the stern purity of the Vedic revelation.

Leaving his home as an outcast rather than submit to the carnal marriage tie, Dayananda spent sixteen years of youth and early manhood in walking from one holy place of Northern India to another. Sometimes he passed into Kashmir, thrice he crossed the snow mountains into Thibet, and, hungry for wisdom, he sought everywhere for the teacher at whose feet he might enjoy it. At last he found wisdom near at hand, in those very scriptures on which he had meditated day and night, and full of reforming zeal he turned to Benares and other seats of religious learning where he might confute the Pundits, whose obscure minds darkened the hard radiance of God's Sanscrit word. In city after city public debates were held before immense audiences, Dayananda in solitary knowledge opposing the priestly hostility of all the teachers combined, while as a rule, the local representative of the British Empire was invited to take the chair and see fair play, or award the prize in subtleties of theological controversy. The latter was a task for which our public-school education does not specially adapt us, but as a rule the British representative was spared the difficulty of metaphysical decision by the Pundits themselves, who violently broke up the meeting under consciousness of defeat. Perhaps unhappily for his cause, Dayananda did not confine himself to the purgation of Hindu superstitions and social abuses, but was equally vehement in his attacks

upon the unworthy additions and compromises that have gathered round Christianity and Islam ; and to his success in interrupting the process of conversion among Hindus we may trace the marked hostility with which Christian and Mohammedan missionaries have always regarded the Samaj.*

The first branch of the society was established in Bombay by Dayananda himself in 1875, but its real strength now lies in the Punjab and United Provinces, in both of which together it numbers about 250,000 members. The two parties into which the Samaj in Lahore is to some extent divided, as I said, both unite in rejecting idols, and in condemning the seclusion or "purdah" of women, the dangerous prerogatives of the priesthood, and all restrictions of caste, except such rights and obligations as are the due of character or intellect. Both unite in maintaining the unity of God, the eternal trinity of God, Soul, and Matter, and the universal wisdom revealed for all races in the Vedas. The differences that divide them are, perhaps, rather of temperament than of doctrine. The party that worships in the city claims to be more democratic in its appeal, to be stricter in life and discipline, but at the same time freer from "purdah" ; and, indeed, its women are allowed to attend divine service in a gallery unveiled, while the women of the other party

* "Life and Teachings of Dayananda Saraswati," by Bawa Chaju Singh (Lahore, 1903).

have a service to themselves, with a woman preacher, whose sermons I was, unhappily, unable to attend. The city party has been called the Culture Section, in which name, I think, there lies a covert sneer. But it briskly retaliated by calling the suburban party the Vulture Section, in which the sneer is not covert at all, but palpably due to a backsliding from vegetarianism.

Not that the extra-mural party itself dreams of backsliding. It only aims at progress and increasing freedom in social life; for, like other great movements of religious reform, it maintains that the kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink. The differences, in fact, have never been serious, though a few years ago there was the same tender hostility as used to prevail between Newton Hall and Lamb's Conduit Street, when Positivists turned their criticism from Christians to each other. But of late persecution, which makes all its victims friends, has brought them together again, and few of the outside world are now aware of any division. It was the deportation of Lajpat Rai that gave the final touch to reconcilement. That a man of austere and generous life, one who had given up great worldly success for the service of the poor and unlearned, should be spirited away without warning and without trial for venturing to criticize official injustice—that was the touch to kindle the indignant fire which welds men into one.

Lajpat Rai was one of those men into whose soul the wrongs of their people enter. By nature averse from politics, he devoted himself to those deeper questions which lie beyond the touch of governments good or bad, and it was not till he was forty that the decisive change came. It is true that he joined the Congress movement in 1888, within two or three years of its beginning; but no one has more severely criticized the Congress and its methods—its unwieldy size, its holiday aspect, its failure to touch the poverty and ignorance of India, and its mistaken confidence in the power of speeches and resolutions for the redress of political wrongs.*

It was significant of his strength of character and indifference to popularity, that after the breach in the Surat Congress, he gave his immense influence to the Moderate party, and declared he would fight under the old banner, as I have described. But it was still more characteristic that, when the Congress had vanished, he remained in Surat for the Social and Swadeshi Conferences, and organized a famine-relief fund there, just as if nothing had happened.

Deeper things than can be reached by Government or speeches have occupied his life. Born at Jaguran, in the district of Ludhiana, where his father taught Persian and Urdu, he became a student at the Government College in Lahore, and a Pleader

* Speech at Lahore before the meeting of the Calcutta Congress, 1906.

Lala Lajpat Rai.

Photo by P. Girdhar Roy & Sons, Lahore.

[*Face p.* 296.

in the Courts there just at the time when the Arya Samaj was engaged in its earliest struggle for religious and social reform.

Under the influence of Hans Raj, now the Principal of the Anglo-Vedic College, a direct and silent man of similar austerity and devotion of life, he joined the Samaj and threw himself into its conflict against idol-worship, child-marriage, girl-widowhood, caste subdivisions, and the other abuses of orthodox Hinduism. Poverty, ignorance, and famine appeared to him the chief outward and visible evils of his country, and for many years, in the intervals of heavy professional work, he lived the life of what one would call a philanthropist, if the word had not gathered round it the inhuman associations of charity. He directed orphanages, superintended education, helped to found Swadeshi banks and mills long before Swadeshi became a political weapon ; he administered famine funds—with a side-glance at the unhappy "famine Christians," the Samajists say he rescued thousands of souls from famine and conversion—and one of his great achievements was the relief of the destitute in the Kangra valley after the terrible earthquake of 1905.

But I think that year marked a change. So far, beyond attending the Congress and publishing two vernacular pamphlets on Mazzini and Garibaldi—dangerous themes, I admit, for a member of any

subject race—his action had not been political. In that year he went to England, like Mr. Gokhale, to represent the cause of Indian reform, and he also visited America. It so happened that he found England on the verge of the greatest Liberal revival. She appeared to have awakened from the ten years' incubus of reaction and Imperialistic misgovernment. Hopes of reform went hand in hand with hatred of oppression. He noticed the movements of the unemployed, the devotion of passive resisters, the sympathies with oppressed nationalities, the rapid recovery from the fever of the Boer war. He noticed that even on such a question as bringing the trams across the bridges the Lords were threatened with a revolution in the ordering of the State.* The same spirit of freedom appeared to be at work in other parts of the world—in Ireland, Japan, Egypt, Persia, and especially in Russia. It was natural that the ideal of winning for his own people a true share in the government of their country should be strengthened.

Unhappily, Lajpat Rai also observed in England that the people were too much occupied with the overwhelming problems confronting themselves to pay close attention to a subject so distant and abstruse as Indian reform. He observed that in

* "Our Struggle for Freedom: How to Carry it on"; see "Lala Lajpat Rai, the Man in his Word" (Madras, Ganesh and Co., 1907), p. 134–145.

English politics the cause of justice had no chance unless it were made a party question, and the Liberal Party refused to make Indian reform a party question, because, while it did not move the people at large, it touched too many important interests. As to the upper classes, he found, as Ruskin had found long before, that "every mutiny, every danger, every crime occurring under our Indian legislation arose directly out of our native desire to live on the loot of India." Only from the Irish and Labour Parties did his mission receive any real encouragement, and, owing to the executive weakness of those two parties, he concluded—one may still hope too hastily—that any appeal to the justice and benevolence of Great Britain as represented by her Parliament was vain :—

"You can at times," he wrote, "successfully appeal to the humanity and benevolence of individuals, but to hope for justice and benevolence from a nation is hoping against hope. The rule of a foreign democracy is, in this respect the most dangerous. The democracy is swayed by so many diverse interests that it is impossible to expect anything like unanimity or even a preponderance of opinion in dealing justly with a subject race, because justice to a subject race often clashes with the interest of some class of the ruling democracy. Whenever an attempt is made to do justice to the subject race, that class rises up, raises a storm, and prevents the Government from doing the right thing. Look at the history of the cotton duties in India, and every one will see the truth of this. How many times has the Government of India been overruled in the matter, simply because

the Home Government cannot afford to risk the opposition of Lancashire and incur its displeasure!" *

He returned to India convinced that the political as well as the social salvation of the country rested only with the Indian peoples themselves. As to means, he looked to anything that would promote political knowledge, courage, and self-reliance. At one time he seems to have contemplated a kind of Teaching Order, something like Mr. Gokhale's "Servants of India."

"Where are the political thinkers of the country," he cried, "whose sole thought by day and night, sleeping or waking, would be how to initiate and carry on the struggle for freedom? Where are the political Sanyasis (wandering friars) whose sole work in life would be the preaching of the gospel of freedom? Were are the Vaishyas of the movement who will make money only for the struggle: who will live poorly and modestly and save every farthing for the sacred cause? . . . Where are the people who will raise agitation for political rights and liberty to the dignity of a Church and will live and die for the same?" †

He believed that the only way to win the consideration of England for reforms was to prove the determination and self-reliance of the Indians themselves.

* *Ibid.*, p. 197, "Indian Patriotism towards the Empire," being an answer to a circular order from the Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab (May, 1906) requiring all schools to celebrate Empire Day in a certain manner.

† *Ibid.*, p. 141, "Our Struggle for Freedom."

"The British are not a spiritual people," he said. "They are either a fighting race or a commercial nation. It would be throwing pearls before swine to appeal to them in the name of the higher morality or justice or on ethical grounds. They are a self-reliant, haughty people, who can appreciate self-respect and self-reliance even in their opponents." *

In a yielding disposition, a false prudence, a distrust of enthusiasm and energy, he found the real dangers of the Indian temperament.

"Our whole life from top to bottom smacks of fear," he wrote, "deadly fear of losing in the estimation of those whom we in our heart of hearts believe to be only usurpers; fear of losing the sunshine of the smile of those whom we believe to be day and night engaged in the exploitation of our country and the spoliation of our people, fear of offending the false gods that have by fraud or force taken possessions of our bodies and souls, fear of being shut up in a dungeon or prison house, as if the freedom that we enjoy were not by its own nature one to be abhorred." †

He was soon in his own person to prove the sincerity of his creed. The condition of the Punjab during 1907 was particularly deplorable. For thirteen years scarcity had prevailed almost without intermission in the south of the province, and the increasing poverty was only relieved by the hideous mortality of the plague. Just before Lajpat Rai's deportation, the official record of deaths from plague in the Punjab alone rose to nearly 65,000 in one

* *Ibid.*, p. 184, "The Swadeshi Movement."

† *Ibid.*, p. 209, "The National Outlook."

week, and the real number was almost certainly higher. On the top of hunger and plague, which we piously call the visitations of God, came the visitations of the Government in a largely increased revenue assessment, increased irrigation rates, the Colonization Bill threatening to break a solemn promise made by Government to the Chenab settlers fifteen years before, and the refusal of the Lieutenant-Governor to take any steps against the leading Anglo-Indian paper of Lahore for a series of abusive articles against Indians, whilst Indian papers were prosecuted and condemned for articles containing certainly no greater incitement to racial animosity.* The feeling in the Punjab became intensely embittered. Local riots occurred at Lahore and Rawal Pindi. Anglo-Indian journalists remembered that it was the fiftieth anniversary of the Mutiny. Strange precautions were taken. English people took refuge in the forts. In the haggard element of fear anything may assume a terrifying shape, and without trial or charge or warning, the most prominent member of the Arya Samaj was seized, and sent to Mandalay. †

It was all a little ironic, this treatment of a sad, retiring, clear-minded man, seeking neither advantage nor fame—one who had freely given up his

* See Introduction, p. 17 ff.

† For a full account of these events, see "The Story of My Deportation," by Lajpat Rai (The Punjabi Press, Lahore, 1908).

possessions, and worked for many years unknown at the humblest duties. When I was at Peshawar, I ventured to ask one in authority why a man of such high reputation as Lajpat Rai should have been selected for attack, and in defence of the Punjab Government, he said : "You see, it was just because he was so good that they fired him. If he had been a rotter, they could have left him alone." I think it was as fine a compliment as any political offender could hope for.

But it was not entirely for his personal excellence that the Punjab Government struck at Lajpat Rai, nor for the wide influence of his decisive eloquence. It was because they hoped to strike the Arya Samaj at the same time. The authorities in Northern India, always timid and suspicious owing to the neighbourhood of the Frontier and the more warlike character of the peoples, had long regarded the Samaj with special enmity. I have known a soldier, with papers of the highest character, turned out of a Sikh regiment admittedly for belonging to the Samaj. Much of this suspicion arises from false information, such as is always supplied to officials who remain isolated from the surrounding people. The editor of the *Hindustan*, for instance, who had recently been sentenced to two years' imprisonment, was described as a graduate of the Anglo-Vedic College, though he had hardly been there a month, and owed the rest of his training to a Christian Mission School.

In the same way young Ajit Singh, who was deported on suspicion of tampering with the native troops, was described as a prominent Samajist, though he had never belonged to the Samaj at all. Some members of the Society have turned to politics, because for the moment the attraction is irresistible for many generous minds, and at such a time, as Disraeli said in "Sybil," "to be young and to be indifferent are no longer synonymous." But the Samaj as such has no concern with politics.

It is a religious body—a Universal Church—bent only on religious purification and the training of youth in accordance with Vedic rules. One can understand the opposition of orthodox Hindus, Mohammedans, and Christian missionaries, for in its religious propaganda the Samaj is distinctly militant and gathers in many converts. But the Indian Government is mistaken in regarding it as a centre of sedition. The leaders of both sections—such men as Hans Raj, Principal of the Anglo-Vedic College in Lahore, and Lala Munshi Rama, Governor of the Gurukula, near Hardwar—have steadily set their faces against political work of any sort, and they discourage political discussion among the students as strictly as the Risley Circular. It is useless, they say, to look for the political regeneration of India while the character and intellect of the people are unregenerate. I do not agree with them, believing, as I do, that political freedom is essential

AN ARYA SAMAJ TEACHER.

[*Face p.* 304.

for any regeneration of the national spirit. But to accuse the Samaj of political aims, to grasp at any forgery or lie which seeks to implicate the Society in sedition, are only signs of ignorance fixed in its isolation among a subject race. In the summer of 1907, Lala Munshi Rama wrote a detailed defence of the Samaj on this point in the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore—a defence so just and reasonable that even the *Gazette*, conspicuous among Anglo-Indian papers for the virulence of its anti-Indian feeling, described the "dignity of this deeply pondered vindication" as commanding respect. In one passage he said :—

"It is an awful responsibility which these people undertake who try to set the Government against the Arya Samaj, a Society which is trying its best to uproot some of the evils of intemperance, of impurity, of child-marriage, of polygamy, of gambling, and a host of other vices—why, it is the Arya Samajists whom you find in the foremost rank of workers in the field."

Six or seven years ago—in 1901 or early 1902 —the writer of that protest cleared a large open space in a pleasant jungle where in a single day I have still seen many deer and monkeys, many wild boars and jackals, the bone-strewn home of a tigress with cubs, the spoor of a huge elephant, wild peacocks perching in the trees, and nearly all the other delights of Eden, except Eve. A few miles away the holy Ganges issues from the foot of the

Himalayas into the great Indian plain, and there stands the holy town of Hardwar, goal of great pilgrimages and pitch of many religious beggars, who keep with them deformed cows and other holy monsters to move the hearts of worshippers to pity. On the open space in the jungle a quadrangle of tin-roofed buildings has been raised to be a Vedic school and future college. Over its gateway floats a red banner, inscribed with the sacred symbol of "Om," and its Brahmacharya, or holy discipline, follows the lines laid down by primeval revelation.

Those lines are Spartan, or, at least, Platonic. The boys are admitted at eight, and their parents take a solemn pledge not to remove them or allow their marriage till they are twenty-five, the lowest age fixed for a man's marriage by the Vedic Scriptures. During these sixteen years the Brahmacharies, or disciples, do not go home, nor are they allowed to write letters or receive them; but their parents may visit them once a month, and do, in fact, visit them about twice a year. The great occasion for these visits is the school anniversary, which happens to be St. Patrick's Day, when over sixty thousand Samajists come, including many thousands of women, and encamp on the edge of the jungle in grass and wicker huts, which were being prepared for them during my stay in the school. Unlike the parents who come to see their sons on speech-days at our public-schools, the

A Street in Hardwar.

Hardwar Strand.

[*Face p.* 306.

pilgrim visitors bring their own supplies, and they generally stay three days, that being all of family life the boys ever know. And that is all they know of woman's society, too, for it is, as I said, an Eveless Paradise.

Such isolation in the midst of our common and intermingled world is, perhaps, dangerous. It comes too near the inhuman monotony of workhouse schools. It is likely to exaggerate the desires and curiosity of growing men, or to produce the hesitation of bashful and secluded lives when confronted with the need for action. The entire removal of home influence might appear harsh if we did not remember the scores of men whom we have known ruined by their parents' vulgarity or their mothers' indulgence. But even if we grant that most parents are quite unfit to bring up children, sixteen years seems too long for any boy to remain in the same place, with the same teachers and the same companions. Even the holiday excursions to historic cities of India, which are arranged by the Governor, and usually conducted by him, do not sufficiently break up the one-sidedness of such a life; and think of the boy who is genuinely unfitted for school and is compelled to remain unhappy for a quarter of man's existence!

Mr. Rama Deva, the young and highly educated head-master of the school, and the other masters as well, met my scruples by urging that in India the

home influence is almost invariably dangerous or softening. They said their only hope of preserving the boys from child-marriage, maternal ignorance, and the evil of cities lay in this monastic seclusion. In place of parents they have a few Superintendents —about one to every twenty-five of the 220 boys then in the school—who live with each class day and night, except during school hours. The greatest difficulty of the school is to find Superintendents worthy and willing, and I should have thought it impossible. The three oldest boys in the top form have rooms to themselves and no Superintendent. All sleep on plank beds, but are allowed a warm covering in winter. All dress in yellow "dhotis" (long cotton cloths) for schooltime, and in white "dhotis" for play. They are allowed wooden sandals, held on by a peg between the toes, but nearly all go barefoot, and with feet and legs bare they ride bareback and play cricket, football, and an Indian form of prisoners' base. The school belongs to the Culture Section of the Arya Samaj, and is so violently vegetarian that I was not allowed to approach the buildings in boots of murdered leather.

The boys get up at four in the morning, and attend Divine service round the symbolic fire. Having taken the vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity for sixteen years at their entrance, when two of those vows can mean very little to them, they are further taught to speak the truth, to practise

concentrated contemplation for a period of every day, and to subdue passion by the "yoga" of deep breathing and holding the breath. They bathe in cold water before sunrise, they climb the steep jungle mountains near, and all learn swimming in the Ganges. Almost the only form of punishment is exclusion from the games. The school hours run to about seven, divided into two parts, and the chief subject taught is Sanscrit. There are the other ordinary subjects — arithmetic and mathematics, history, science, and English—and, unlike the Government schools, all teaching is given in the vernacular Hindi, so that the boys understand the subjects better, and can cover more ground, whereas in ordinary schools the learning is continually hampered by the foreign tongue. But the chief means of education is Sanscrit, just as in my old school it was Greek. At least seven years are spent in getting that amazing Sanscrit grammar off by heart, and in learning to read the Vedas. Whether the Sanscrit literature is worth all that, I cannot say; we spent much the same time over Greek, and it was well worth it to about one in twenty. But in all the upper forms, though none of the boys had yet approached the full age, they could already read and write Sanscrit as fluently as a mother tongue, and that is more than any of us ever did with Greek.

But the subject taught never matters much.

The thing that does matter is the manner of teaching, and nearly all the schools and colleges I visited in India had the one common fault, that they tried to force knowledge into the mind by giving information. They treated the mind as a passive vessel to be filled through the channel of the ears. The method was by lecture, not by dialectic, and I at least have never learnt anything by being lectured. If the officials wish to reform our system of education in India, here, at the very basis of teaching, is where they might begin. They will find they are far too late if they hope to stifle the national aspiration for liberty by excluding the study of our own history and the works of Western thinkers. Those are plants that we ourselves have generously set in India, and they are too deep-rooted to be pulled up now. But to transform the ordinary teaching into real education would be a change indeed.

The Gurukula (the word means The Master's Home) that I have been describing takes no Government grant, and submits to no Government inspection; nor is it affiliated to a Government University, like the Anglo-Vedic College in Lahore. In the boarding houses of the Anglo-Vedic School and College a pupil's total expenses come to 20 or 25 rupees a month. In the Gurukula the parents pay 10 rupees a month (£8 a year) for the complete education, including clothes, food, games, and all.

IN THE GURUKULA.

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But the cost for each boy is really about £15 a year, and the deficit is made up by the subscriptions of the Samajists. Fifteen pounds a year is a great deal for a poverty-stricken country like India, but I wish our public schools did not cost ten times as much. In the great Government school and college for Mohammedans at Aligarh the Principal told me the parents paid from 20 to 40 rupees a month according to the boy's room (£16 to £32 a year). But that is a home of luxury, and I believe the money required to keep a son there often amounts to £45 or even £50 a year, as much as a third of the payment at one of our own public schools.

CHAPTER XVII

A Festival of Spring

The mango trees were all in bloom, and the air full of their smell. It has just the touch of turpentine in it that makes the mango fruit so pleasant, and is so refreshing in an English room that has been spring-cleaned with furniture polish. The mango bloom is the Indian "may,"—the sign that spring has come indeed, and that was why all the great Sirdars, or landowners, of Baroda were gathered in the palace hall at nine o'clock one morning, and sat in thick rows of white-clad figures, with Mahratta turbans of red and gold on their heads, and curved swords glittering across their knees. The Maharajah had summoned them in durbar, to celebrate the festival of Vasantha, or the Spring, and on the inlaid pavement below their seats a nautch-girl from Madras danced without ceasing, to the inspiriting noise of three or four pipes and a little drum. All the instruments sounded their peculiar notes together, but apparently with random independence, though the girl seemed to know what varied emotions they

would express. For she danced forward with gestures that she felt to be suited to some imperceptible motive, her jewels flashing, and the heavy gold of her sash swinging over her knees. Then, having reached her limit of advance towards the empty throne, she walked quietly backwards, softly clapping her little brown hands to some imperceptible time.

Suddenly from the palace garden came the sound of the tiny old guns which the British Government allows Native Rulers to retain for saluting purposes, or to batter the mud walls of an occasional village, as evidence of their regal power. To the roar of this artillery the Maharajah entered, and, keeping step at his side, came the British Resident, conspicuous in civilization's clothing. Behind them, stiff with scarlet and gold, stalked the British officers of a regiment quartered upon the State by the terms of an ancient treaty. Passing up the pavement between the rows of Sirdars, the Maharajah took his seat upon the purple velvet sofa, having the British Resident side by side upon his right, while the British officers settled into the topmost chairs, like a patch of poppies in a daisy field. All the time the pipes and drum never ceased, and the dancing-girl continued to advance and retire with various embellishments.

Attendants appeared, bearing garlands and silver sprinklers, and trim little bunches of flowers tightly tied up. The heaviest garland was selected for the

British Resident, and he bent his comely head submissively to receive it on his neck. It was made of white jasmine, picked out with silver "fairy rain," which I have mentioned before as beautifying our Christmas-trees. He was also presented with a tight bunch of flowers, and lavishly sprinkled with scent from the silver vessels. Similar but smaller garlands were then placed round the necks of the British officers; similar but smaller bunches were presented to them, and they were sprinkled with scent, but less lavishly, as became their inferior position in the representation of Britain's might. When the most junior subaltern had been sprinkled, the Maharajah and the Resident rose, and the British contingent marched out of the hall, the garlands flopping against their thighs, as when of old Greek bulls went adorned for sacrifice.

So the rulers departed, and again the feeble old guns did their utmost to voice the honours due to Imperial grandeur. Then the Maharajah returned to his sofa, and a sigh of relief appeared to pass through the hall. I thought I could even hear it from behind the carved shutters of the gallery, where ladies stood watching in seclusion, like the ladies behind the grill of our House of Commons. The attendants again bore garlands, bouquets, and sprinklers into the hall. The Maharajah was garlanded first, and then his son, the heir to the sofa, who received his honours with a superior

smile that told of Oxford's contamination. The most peculiar part of the ceremony came next, when silver plates were brought in, heaped high with vermilion powder and with yellow, to represent the fertilizing dust of flowers in spring, and this dust was thrown in handfuls over the Maharajah and his heir, and then over each Sirdar in turn.

Suddenly the white chests of all those loyal counsellors blazed with patches of scarlet and gamboge, while pipes and drum pursued their own wild will, and the dancing-girl danced up seductively. Then the Maharajah rose, and the whole assembly followed him from the hall. The climax had been reached, and the ceremony of spring was over, except that for the rest of the day the street boys rejoiced in "all the fun of the fair," throwing red and yellow powder over the passers-by. And if they mixed a little oil with the powder, the passer-by would recall the flowers that bloom in the spring whenever he put those clothes on again.

You would suppose that such a ceremony was but the childish consolation of some wretched prince, whom we allow to retain on sufferance the pomps and vanities of barbaric splendour, just as an idiot heir is allowed a rocking-horse and wooden sword by his trustees. And that is partly true. It is in the spirit of interested trustees for idiot children that the British Government gives the Maharajah that artillery to play with, and arms his handful

of troops with ancient muzzle-loaders that I had despaired of ever seeing in use. An ordinary and enfeebled ruler might thus solace himself with pretty shows for a life of miserable impotence, just as Napoleon's son played at soldiers in the Austrian palaces. Such is the end of most of those who are born to rule our Native States. Fantastic palaces in every street, marble courts where fountains play all the summer, bedizened elephants in lordly rows, bejewelled girls beyond the dreams of Solomon, studs of horses ceaselessly neighing, changes of golden clothes for every hour of the day and night, heaps of golden coins piled high in treasuries, drink deep as wells, exquisite foods selected from Paris to Siam—oh, but to be weak is miserable!

But the ruler of Baroda has the strength that conquers power out of weakness. Brought up among the temptations of princes, cheated with the mockeries of authority, distrusted as seditious for the very excellence of his reforms, he has raised his little State of some two million souls to become the most advanced and best administered district of India, with the possible exception of Mysore. I know the worst that can be said against him. His land-tax is rather above the average of British India, but at all events his entire income of just under £1,000,000 a year is spent in the country itself, and does not go to cherish the annuitants in Cheltenham or Whitehall. Like the English aristocracy, he is

fond of building more houses than one man needs to live in. Like the late Lord Salisbury and Mr. Kruger, he displays an exaggerated solicitude in providing for members of his family, beyond the requirements of laudable thrift. And, worst fault of all, he has been sometimes suspected of imitating the Anglo-Indian authorities in favouring Europeans at the cost of fully qualified Indians. On one occasion also, I believe, he conducted a punitive expedition, on almost British lines, against some troublesome villagers. I know all this is said, and much of it is very likely true, for even in a hovel it is difficult to live above reproach. But I have also heard that in the foolish Durbar at Delhi, when other native rulers salaamed and prostrated themselves to earth, the Maharajah of Baroda went up to Lord Curzon like a man, and shook him heartily by the hand; and I think that story as likely to be true as the others.

It is now over twenty-five years since he entered upon his power, after a few years of tutelage under the British Government, which had deposed his predecessor for overstepping the latitude granted to native rulers in everything but politics. In that quarter-century, by the help of carefully chosen Ministers, such as Mr. Romesh Chandra Dutt, he has realized reforms in government and daily life that are continually called impossible by ourselves. Throughout his whole State he has absolutely separated the judicial from the executive functions—

a reform that we have acknowledged for years to be essential for India, but are boggling over still. He has restored the ancient village Panchayat, or parish council, by the men whom villagers can trust, whereas, in our passion for rigid and centralized power, we have almost destroyed the last vestige of this national training in self-government.

After a careful experiment for fourteen years in one district, he has now made primary education compulsory and universal throughout his State. Whereas in British India the Government expenditure upon primary education still stood in 1906–7 at about £200,000, or considerably less than £1 per thousand of the population, in Baroda the proportion was about £1 to every fifty-five, and the State counts more educated girls, for its size, than any other part of India. The latest step in constitutional reform has been the admission of genuinely elected members into the Legislative Council, which was to meet that year (1908) for the first time in its more democratic form. Such reforms as the Indian Government had at that time proposed for its Legislative Council, were only intended to frustrate what shadow of democratic principle then existed in them.

But it is much harder to change a social custom than to legislate, and the Maharajah's greatest triumphs lay in the prevention of child-marriages, the emancipation of ladies from the "purdah," or

Making Yarn.

A Village Panchayat.

[*Face p.* 318.

curtained life, and the breaking-down of caste barriers. In all this he had been aided by the encouragement and example of his Maharani, who had stood by his side like one of the heroic queens of Mahratta history. In all India I suppose there was not another man and woman who had done more for the happiness and advancement of their people, or done more to disprove the common Anglo-Indian charge that Indians are incapable of carrying out even their own reforms. For their very success they were suspected and maligned by officials, who had not the courage to imitate their methods. But when official torpor and private malignity had said their worst, the Maharajah and his queen remained among the royal souls of India. They had once more established the old Roman paradox that it is possible to follow virtue even in a palace, and there was something almost Aurelian in their proud service to the Commonwealth.*

* For the development of Baroda, see the admirable series of annual Administration Reports prepared up to 1907 by Mr. Romesh C. Dutt, C.I.E., Revenue Minister of Baroda, and since then by his successor, Mr. Kersasp Rustamji.

CHAPTER XVIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

LET it be granted, as a matter of bare fact, quite apart from any wishes or opinions, that for many years to come we shall retain military and administrative command in India. Rightly or wrongly, we shall retain it, unless we are so overwhelmingly defeated at home that we almost cease to be not only an empire but a nation. Probably it is to our own advantage to retain it, because to withdraw before India is strong enough to stand alone would degrade our national life with a cowardly sense of failure. Personally I think it is to India's advantage also, because her peoples are so unarmed, undrilled, and unorganized under our rule that if we withdrew our place would easily be taken within a year by Russia, Germany, or Japan; perhaps by all three in conflict. When the very worst that can be said against our rule has been said, the substitution of Russia's rule for ours would be an incalculable disaster from which India might recover only after many generations, just as Poland, the Caucasus, and Persia may.

Nor have Germany and Japan yet given proof of governing subject races with success, much less with humanity. Till India is sufficiently advanced in arms, unity, and knowledge to hold her own (which used to be the hope of our statesmen), it is probably to her advantage that we should retain the ultimate supremacy in government and war. We may not do it particularly well, but the chances are that others would do it incomparably worse. Let it be granted, anyhow, that nothing but overwhelming national defeat will deter us from doing it.

But whilst we shall continue, as far as politics can foresee, to superintend the administration of India and to protect her from external attack, the danger is that our bureaucracy, always the slowest form of government to realize change, should ignore the new spirit arising in the country, or should seek to stifle rather than guide it. It is the conviction of many that India is now standing on the verge of a national renaissance—a new birth in intellect, social life, and the affairs of state. There are unmistakable evidences of this, not only among educated Hindus, but among educated Mohammedans; not only among the educated classes, but throughout the masses of the people. Many things have combined to create a new spirit, and we have ourselves contributed much. The long peace that has made development possible, the easy communication by railways, the wide distribution of

newspapers, the visits of highly educated Indians to England, the use of English as a common tongue among educated people of all races and religions, the increasing knowledge of our history and our hard-won liberties, the increasing study of our great Liberal thinkers—all these admirable advantages we have ourselves contributed to the new spirit, and it is useless for startled reactionaries to think of withdrawing them now. We must also take into account the example set to all Oriental nationalities by Japan, and the awakened stirring of Liberalism in England herself, and, no matter how feeble its efforts and how bitter its failure, in Russia, Egypt, Persia, and Turkey.

Most of these beneficent influences move slowly, with a deep and gradual force, and, whatever happens, they will continue to move, though to move slowly. But the outburst of the new spirit which we call the unrest in India was occasioned by a different order of things, for the most part, sudden, external, and pernicious. Such things were the contemptuous disregard of Indian feeling in the Partition of Bengal and Lord Curzon's University speech upon Indian mendacity ; the exclusion of fully qualified Indians from public positions, in contradiction to Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 ; several notorious cases of injustice in the law courts, where English criminals were involved ; numerous instances of petty persecution for political opinions since 1905 ;

the well-known measures for the suppression of personal liberty and freedom of speech in 1907 and 1908 ; the espionage of police and postal officials ; and the increasing insolence of the vulgar among Anglo-Indians, as shown in ordinary behaviour and in the newspapers which represent their views.

All these obvious and external causes of complaint, crowded into the space of very few years, have been sapping India's confidence in the justice of our rule and the benevolence of our people. Indians have, no doubt, exaggerated both the injustice and the malevolence. They have taken a few flagrant cases of injustice as typical of our Courts ; they have mistaken for malevolence what is only our reckless indifference to far-off responsibilities. But we cannot wonder at their mistakes. Nearly every one generalizes about foreign nations from the one or two specimens he knows ; and we, as foreigners in India, must not hope to escape generalizations rapidly founded on the behaviour of every man or woman who may represent us there unworthily. As to our national indifference, I wish we could say that this charge also was founded only on special and notorious instances. But it is not. Our indifference to the Indian peoples, from whom we are continually sucking so much of our wealth, is universal and invariable. Or it is varied only at long intervals after outbreaks of bloodshed and threatenings of revolt. No wonder that a growing

party in India believes that only by such means can England's attention be roused, and any permanent advantage for their country obtained.

Of course, they are inconsiderate. In spite of the ill-manners of a certain type of Anglo-Indian, we are as a whole rather a polite and kind-hearted people, and the mere shadow of injustice makes us seethe with indignation, so long as it is not too far away. If they charge us with indifference, they ought to consider that we are faced with almost insoluble problems of our own; that we are a very busy people, and that our knowledge of what goes on in India is generally limited to one or two speeches which attract little attention, a few Parliamentary questions, and the reports of official or other journalists whose very existence depends on standing well with the Anglo-Indian community. Indians are too apt not to consider these mitigating circumstances. But it does not tend to make people considerate when men, women, and children are dying of a comparatively recent plague by hundreds of thousands every year; when for fifteen years in succession famines have been almost regularly recurrent; when increasing malaria is rotting the population away in body and mind, and when thousands, or probably millions, of people who used to have two meals a day can now afford only one. I do not say these disasters are the fault of the Indian Government or the British people. But it

is obvious that they do not tend to make the sufferers under them considerate towards the difficulties of rulers who hardly suffer from them at all. They are likely to be the less considerate because they know that, out of a revenue over which they have no control, at least £20,000,000 a year is withdrawn from their country to be spent in England, partly in the shape of interest on serviceable loans, but largely in incomes, pensions, and other more questionable forms; while, even against the better judgment of the highest Anglo-Indian authorities themselves, the greatest Indian industry is kept depressed by the countervailing excise of 3½ per cent. imposed by the Cotton Duties Act of 1896 on cottons made and sold in India, simply for the benefit of our Lancashire mills.

Considerate or not, the new spirit—the section of it that has time and youth on its side—has begun to despair of further appeals and petitions for English justice or assistance. In spite of the splendid traditions of many noble Englishmen from Sir Thomas Munro down to Lord Ripon, I suppose few representatives of our rule have been popular among the Indian races. That was not usually the fault of our representatives; their position made genuine popularity very difficult, and it is impossible for one race to deny freedom to another and rule it to the true advantage of either. But I think that till lately the verdict of most Indians

upon us would have been the same as the schoolboy's who called Dr. Temple "a beast, but a just beast." In their verdict to-day the compliment of that saving clause would generally be omitted, and that loss of our high reputation for justice, if it is to be permanent, is the worst loss we could ever suffer—worst for ourselves as patriots who honour our country for her justice, and worst for the Indians, whose position a sense of permanent injustice will render intolerable.

The belief that petitions for the redress of grievances, whether presented to the Indian Government or to the British people, are equally vain, is not so serious a matter for us as the distrust of our justice, but it contributed very strongly to the new spirit in its extreme form. Our disregard of all the public protests against the Partition of Bengal and all the persistent appeals for its withdrawal; our disregard of the reasonable pleading of such men as Mr. Gokhale and Dr. Rash Behari Ghose in the Viceroy's Council, have perhaps done more than anything else to discredit the methods of the old Congress. I do not mean that the Congress has been useless. It served as a training ground for political knowledge. It afforded a centre for the growing unity of India, and without it the leaders of Indian reform could hardly have formulated their own programme. But in two avowed objects it has failed; it has had no influence upon the action of

the Indian Government, and no influence upon English opinion at home. For twenty-two years it was a model of order and constitutional propriety. It passed excellent resolutions, it demanded the redress of acknowledged grievances, in trustful loyalty it arranged deputations to the representatives of the Crown. By the Anglo-Indians its constitutional propriety was called cowardice, its resolutions remained unnoticed, its grievances unredressed, and the representative of the Crown refused to receive its deputation. In England, outside the half-dozen who take some interest in India, no one knew where the Congress met, what language it spoke, what were its demands, or what its object; no one knew, and no one cared.

The new spirit perceived that it was useless addressing pious resolutions to the official waste-paper basket. The cry of "self-reliance, not mendicancy" spread through the country. One last effort to attract British attention to the grievance of India was made by the Swadeshi movement and the boycott on British goods. "Touch the pockets of our rulers, and they will listen"—that was the hope. And the hope was partly realized, for owing to Swadeshi and the local disturbances in Eastern Bengal, Calcutta, and the Punjab, England during 1907 and 1908 has probably paid more attention to India than at any time since the Mutiny.

But the principle of Swadeshi has now been

developed by the new spirit for purposes far beyond the immediate object proposed. Swadeshi in manufacture and commerce is now followed for the great economic purpose of restoring the Indian industries, threatened or already ruined by England's favoured competition. And even this economic Swadeshi is seen to be only a part of a much wider movement in self-reliance. On every side societies and orders are growing up for the promotion of Indian ideals and the development of Indian character, quite independently of our influence, and their members are sometimes inspired by an uncalculating devotion like that of the early Christians. Such are the Arya Samaj in the Punjab and United Provinces; the Servants of India in Poona; the Brahmo Samaj of highly educated Theists in Calcutta; the Order of Ramakrishna on the Ganges above Calcutta; the Hindu College in Benares, with which Mrs. Annie Besant's name is so closely connected; the Order of the Gangrath Institute near Baroda; to say nothing of the whole Volunteer movement, the object of which is the renewal of organization, courage, and physical power among the youth. None of these movements is political in aim. Their work as societies lies in social and theological reform. But both in aim and method all are distinctly Swadeshi. They take little account of Government or of the Anglo-Indian community. In some of them there is even a tendency to react

against reform, lest some taint of Western civilization should be introduced into Indian life. But religious and social as these movements are in origin and object, it is no longer possible to exclude their keener members from politics; for, among educated people, the events of the last few years have given to national politics the place once held by theology, and even social reform cannot now be entirely separated from political reform, since the result of educational and other advance is inevitably an increased demand for self-government.

The question immediately before India now is, which of two courses with regard to ourselves the new spirit as a whole will take. On the one hand, it may follow the line of most resistance. It may proclaim throughout the whole country: "It is useless to trouble about any reforms that these intruding foreigners will give us. Let them go on their way with their Advisory Councils, their Notables, their extended Legislative Councils, and other deceits. They have never paid the smallest attention to our real demands. In Mill's words, they keep us as a warren or preserve for their own use, a place to make money in, a human farm to be worked for their own profit. It is for us to pursue our own course, disregarding their presence. Beyond paying their taxes, we need have little concern with them. If they imprison us, we will go to gaol silently; if they deport us without trial, we will

endure without protest; if they execute us, we know that our souls will be at once re-incarnated to continue the struggle. But we will not notice their Government either by sharing in it or denouncing it. In religion, in education, in industries and common life, we will follow our own national lines just as though no foreigners were pretending to rule us. If enough of us combine, we shall embarrass their position; perhaps we shall make it untenable as well as ridiculous. But whether it is untenable or not, we do not greatly care, till a common Indian nationality has the strength to take freedom into its own hands."

That is the line of most resistance, always a tempting line to take, and many Indians are taking it now. The temptation must be almost irresistible in a vast population like India's, where a handful of people from a distant country maintain a predominance unmitigated by social intercourse, marriage, or permanent residence. All the more because this predominance rests on so narrow a basis that for its own maintenance it is inclined to deter the subject race from all initiative, enterprise, or leadership, and so to reduce it to what Dadabhai Naoroji has described as "moral poverty." Any movement to check this national deterioration must be welcomed on behalf of the Indian peoples, except by those who openly desire those races to remain as flocks of sheep, dependent on the good nature

or interested bounty of their appointed shepherds. But that is not the ideal that the best of our statesmen in India have set before themselves, nor is it an ideal that can any longer be maintained. The new spirit has already overthrown it.*

But besides this tempting line of most resistance there is another way, and, considering the external dangers that threaten India and her own existing difficulties of race, religion, and inexperience, this other way is probably the way of wisdom. The new spirit may still endeavour to act in harmony with us for the common good, acquiescing in our presence as on the whole tending to justice and advancement, acknowledging the material advantages we have brought, but at the same time persistently pressing for extensions of liberty, taking every opportunity that offers, and never hesitating to grasp at any chance of progress because it falls short of the perfect ideal. I admit that to follow this course requires a sweet reasonableness and a strength of character which few men in any nation possess. But after the defeats of many years, Mr. Gokhale

* This subject of "moral poverty" was treated in a paper Prof. C. F. Andrews of St. Stephen's College, Delhi, read before the Pan-Anglican Congress in London (1908), and published in "The Indian Review" for June. The success of Prof. Rudra, a Bengali economist and historian, as Principal of that College, with a staff that includes First-Class Cambridge men, one of them a Fellow of his College, is one of the many disproofs of the theory that Indians are incapable of initiative and leadership. Even Mohammedan men of learning are glad to serve under him gratuitously.

still retains his hope; and after the outrage upon his own freedom and the very basis of our liberties, Lajpat Rai still classes himself with the Moderates. It depends almost entirely on ourselves whether those who, in spite of recent disappointments, still believe in an English feeling for justice and freedom shall be able to make their voices heard. If only the more reasonable and hopeful party had something to point to—some generous and ungrudging act of justice on England's part—they might still silence the counsels of despair. It is not yet too late. Only, it is no good juggling with sham reforms and half-hearted concessions. Our measures, as Burke said, must be remedial.

The nature of such measures is well known. They should include a modification of the Partition of Bengal, by which the central province would be united under one Governor, having the same status as the Governors of Bombay and Madras, while the contiguous western districts were collected into a new province, and Assam remained isolated as it is by nature and race, under a Chief Commissioner responsible either to the Viceroy or to the Governor of Bengal.* They should include the appointment of at least one Indian on each of the Executive Councils (a concession which in the case of the Viceroy's Council seems likely to be fulfilled), and an enlargement of the Viceroy's and other Legislative

* See Introduction, p. 10.

Councils by genuinely elected members up to the number of half the Council. This would leave to the officials a steady but narrow majority, the right of absolute veto remaining with the Viceroy, Governor, or Lieutenant-Governor. It might then be laid down that if a large proportion of the elected members—say, two-thirds—were opposed to a certain measure, it should be suspended for further consideration. Some similar control should be granted over the expenditure of money, for at present the representative members have no voice in the revenue that is scraped off their people year by year, and the papers of protest or suggestion, which they read as they sit round the Viceroy's council-table, might almost as well remain unread for any effect they have upon the official policy.

These reforms could be followed by a gradual extension of primary education, which might in the end cost us £5,000,000 a year, but would be well worth the price, even if we had to save something off the £20,000,000 now spent on the Army, and something off the other public services. Owing to our present parsimony in education, the census of 1901 reported that there were 104,500,000 males in India who could not read, 826 boys out of every 1000 of school age who had no school to go to, and only 1 in 10 males literate, and 7 in 1000 females. Further, we could be loyal to the late Queen's Proclamation and admit Indians without prejudice

to the positions they had fitted themselves for. We could make the position of the police such that they would be no longer compelled to help out their livelihood by corruption and false evidence. We could resolutely extinguish the system of Begar or forced labour for the benefit of Civilians and other Europeans. And we could make it illegal for any representative of our Government to condescend to the baseness of opening other people's letters, even on the off-chance of spying upon sedition.

Such measures as these would be remedial. They would serve as an earnest of our country's goodwill, and of our determination to maintain the principles of freedom and justice in our government. They would cut the ground under the feet of those who, by proclaiming perpetual distrust of our intentions, are fostering a fanatical hatred against us. But I am aware that measures by themselves are insufficient. What is wanted is the difficult thing that our fathers called a "change of heart," and no legislation can effect that. We need a change that would transform our people's arrogance towards "natives"; a change that would prevent the ladies and gentlemen whom we send out from degenerating into "bounders" where Indians are concerned, and would make it impossible for an Englishman to display towards Indians the outrageous manners that would exclude him from decent society at home. Such a change must be extremely difficult among

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[*Face p.* 334.

ourselves of the upper and middle classes, for we are not born very imaginative or sympathetic, we are educated on a plane of patronizing superiority, and outside our class and nation any claim to equality staggers us like a sudden blow. But there are one or two quite simple points on which we might begin to practise for the change. Except among the baser sort of Anglo-Indians, the word "nigger" has died out, and I would suggest that the word "native" might follow it. If the phrase "rulers and ruled" died too, and if our social philosophers would cease to drone out their weary ineptitude that "East is East, and West is West," the situation would be much eased. I have sometimes thought also that our reputation would stand higher if English people who insist, quite rightly, on the importance of our prestige, were to abstain now and then, for the sake of our prestige, from games that develop neither courage nor strength, and are regarded by Indians with contemptuous astonishment, and from a mode of dancing which is regarded by Indians as an indescribable abomination.

But the present crisis is too acute to allow of waiting for a change of heart. Upon our immediate action will depend the terms under which we must maintain our position in India: whether we are to hold the new spirit fairly on our side, and to co-operate with it for the progress of the country in enlightenment and self-government; or whether we

are to have our rule confronted by impenetrable resentment, and our best efforts thwarted by indifference or suspicion. In any case, India has a long and bitter road to travel. The gulf between her educated and uneducated classes is wider even than in our own country. She has many divisions of thought, and caste, and race to overcome. But, as to the growth of her new spirit, we need have no fear. It is one of the most hopeful signs of our hopeful time. Every act of injustice on our part, and every attempt at political suppression, have only promoted India's sense of unity and hastened her progress in self-reliance. If injustice and suppression continue, their effect will be the same. Whatever course our action may now take, the new spirit has already breathed a fresh life into large classes of the Indian peoples, and it will continue to afford a high motive for self-devotion, and for the moral courage and love of freedom in which the Indian character has hitherto been lacking. For India herself the present unrest holds out a promise of the highest possibilities, no matter how much she may suffer in realizing them.

But for us the brief interval left for decision is momentous. On our decision it will depend whether, in contempt of the freedom we have with such obstinate labour secured for ourselves, we shall sink, step by step, from suppression into persecution, and from persecution into atrocities that now we should

shudder at ; or whether we shall display strength enough to welcome the spirit of freedom and nationality which we have done so much to create, and strength enough to advance with it hand-in-hand for the furtherance of India's welfare as a self-respecting country, and so to redeem our reputation for the love of a freedom which others may enjoy, as we enjoy it.

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